Rememberance of The Beloved

Questions And Answers
About Imam Mahdi (p.b.u.h)



By
Seyed Husain Husaini

بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

Remembrance of The Beloved

:Writer

Seyed Husain Husaini

:Published in print

Naba Cultural Organization

:Digital Publisher

Ghaemiyeh center of computerized researches

Contents

Remembrance of The Beloved

BOOK ID

Featured: ۱۳۲۵ - Husaini, Seyed Husain

Title/ Author: Remembrance of the beloved : questions and answers about Imam Mahdi (p.b.u.h.)/ by seyed Husain Husaini; translated by Jalil Dorrani.; edited and reviewed by Hamid Farnagh

.Publisher:Tehran: Naba Cultural Organization, ۲۰۱۳=۱۳۹۲

Size/pages: ۳۴۸p,۱۴*۲۱cm

ISBN:۹۷۸-۹۶۴-۸۳۲۳-۶۳-۴

Cataloging:FAPA

Note:English

Subject: ۱۲th Imam

Subject: Mahdaviyat

Added details:Durrani, Jalil,translator

Added detail:Farnagh, Hamid, Editor

Congressional ranking:BP۵۱/ح۵ی ۲۰۴۹۵۲ ۱۳۹۲

Dewey classification :۲۹۷/۹۵۹

National bibliography number:۱۲۹۳۰۷۰

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No. of Copies: ۱۰۰۰ / First Edition: ۲۰۰۸

Publisher: Naba Cultural Organization

Address: P. O. Box: ۱۵۶۵۵-۳۷۷ / Tehran. Iran

E-mail: Info@NabaCultural.org

ISBN: ۹۷۸-۹۶۴-۸۳۲۳۶۳-۴

t:۲

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

:Prologue

During the period of the holy prophet's (s.a.w.a.) appointment and proclamation, he .entrusted the people with two precious souvenirs out of divine inspiration

(I leave with you two weighty things: the Book of Allah and my offspring." (١)"

This he said at the time when he himself bore the responsibility of explaining and interpreting the commandments and doctrines and he acquainted the Muslims with different levels from various angles of religion. However, he entrusted the task of interpretation and explanation of diverse religious matters to his successors after him .on par with the Qur'an (ثقل) and named them the other weighty thing

The pure and honourable Imams (a.s.) too took charge of this divine mission in line with the holy Qur'an and the prophet's (s.a.w.a.) Sunnah and prevented distortions in belief, wrong interpretations of holy Qur'an and Islamic doctrines. For this reason, along side the holy

t:٣

For instance, refer to Usul-Kafi, ١:٢٩۴; Musnad of Ahmad Hanbal ۵:١٨١-١٨٩ and - ١ Seerah Ibne-Kathir ٢:۴۴۵

Qur'an, we must search the Islamic matters and the prophet's (s.a.w.a.) Sunnah in the sayings of the holy Imams (a.s.). These sayings are commonly known as "Hadith or ."traditions

At a short glance, we can classify the sayings of the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Imams :as follows

In the form of preliminary Hadith and sayings: They (p.b.u.t.) would explain to one or -١ more people matters concerned with belief or ethics or Tafsir (interpretation) or Fiqh (jurisprudence) or history etc. These traditions was at times in the form of Hadith-e-Qodsi that was narrated from the Almighty Allah (except Qur'an) or in the form of .simple Hadith

Example for the first category: Hazrat Reza (a.s.) said: Musa-ibn-Jafar narrates from Jafar-ibn-Muhammad from Muhammad-ibn-Ali from Ali-ibn-Husain from Husain-ibn-Ali from Ali-ibn-Abi Talib from the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) from Gabriel from Meka'eel :from Israfeil from Luh from Qalam that Allah says

The Vilayat (authority) of Ali-ibn-Abi Talib (a.s.) is My castle. Anyone who enters My " (castle is safe from My chastisement."(١

:As an example for the second category, the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) said

(O Ali you are the best of all men; anyone who doubts about you is an unbeliever."(٢"

In the form of speeches and sermons: Amongst the numerous specimens are the -٢ :(invaluable sermons of Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.) just as he says in one sermon(٣

t:۴

Musnad Al-Imam al-Reza (a.s.) ١:١١۴ -١

Ibid: ١١٣, tradition ٧٢ -٢

Nahjul-Balagha, sermon ١۴۴ -٣

The Imams are from Quraish; from sub-tribe of Hashim; and except for them" ".nobody is qualified for the post of Imamate

Other Imams too have presented their sermons on various topics where some of .them can be seen in the form of collective traditions

٣- In the form of debates and discussions with one or more people (in matters of (belief, Tafsir etc

An example of such debates is the case of Imam Sadiq's (a.s.) debate with the atheists. One example: The opponents said: How does Allah become pleased and angry for the happiness and anger of Fatemah (a.s.)? Imam (a.s.) replied: You narrate tradition that says Allah becomes pleased because of His faithful slave's happiness and turns angry because of his anger. Isn't the holy prophet's (s.a.w.a.) daughter a (woman of faith? They replied: 'You have spoken the truth!(١)

٤- In the form of invocation: Its worthy to mention that most of the lofty and sublime sayings of the noble Imams have been presented in the form of invocation and .supplication

:Imam Sajjad (a.s.) would place his face on the earth at mid-night and would say

O Allah! Thou are Magnificent who does not turn back hopeless the one who calls" Thee and Thou are aware of the one who seeks proximity towards Thee and only (Thou fulfill their needs."(٢)

:Also, he (a.s.) says

أسألك الروح و الراحه عند الموت والعفو عنی حین ألقاك

t:۵

١- Ehtejaj ٢:٣۵۴

٢- Sahifa Jama'e Sajjadiah: ١۵٨, dua ٨٢

In the form of Ziarat: Our divine leaders have described numerous matters - ۵ :pertaining to belief like monotheism, recognition of Imam etc in the form of Ziarat

In Ziarate-Amin'allah which has come down about Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.) and is :recited for all the Imams, it begins as such

السلام علیک یا أمین الله فی أرضه و حجته علی عباده. السلام علیک یا أمیر المومنین

:We recite

O Allah make my soul firm with respect to Your decree and make me pleased with" ".Your decision and judgement

In the form of inscription, letters and treatise: Many a times, the holy prophet - ۶ (s.a.w.a.) and the noble Imams (a.s.) would note down points on belief, ethics, jurisprudence etc in the form of letters and dispatch them to near and far places. For :instance, Imam Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.) wrote for his representative about charity

Set out on the path of piety of the Unique Allah (Who has no partner). Do not create" fear in any Muslim and do not collect charity from him by force and do not ask more (than the required right of Allah in wealth...."(۱

In the form of question and answers: Question and answers is one of the best and -۷ most natural way for understanding and explanation and the holy Qur'an gives prime :importance to this matter. On the one hand, Allah addresses the people and says

(So ask the followers of the Reminder if you do not know". (Qur'an, ۱۶:۴۳"

t:۶

Nahjul-Balagha, letter ۳۸۰/۵۲ -۱

:On the other hand, in fifteen instances, He reminds the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) that .They ask you and you reply them in such and such manner "يسألونك"

In the noble traditions too, on numerous occasions, the Imams (a.s.) were questioned on matters like belief, ethics and jurisprudence and they replied the people .accordingly

Now, we shall set forth as a good luck, two such specimens of question and answers :(.by Imams (a.s

a) Ma'mun asked Imam Reza (a.s.): O Abul-Hasan explain to me how your great grandfather Ali-ibn-Abi Talib is the distributor of paradise and hell? Imam (a.s.) replied: 'O leader of believers. Didn't your father narrate from his fathers from Abdullah-ibn-Abbas who said: I heard the prophet (s.a.w.a.) saying: Love of Ali (a.s.) is "?belief (faith) and enmity to him is infidelity

.Ma'mun said: Yes

(Imam (a.s.) said: So he is the distributor of paradise and hell."(١

Ma'mun said: O Abul-Hasan, may Allah not make me live after you. I bear witness that .you are the heir to the prophet's knowledge

Aba Sult Herawi says: When Imam Reza (a.s.) returned to his residence I said: O the son of Allah's messenger, how nicely you replied the caliph (Ma'mun)! He said: 'O Ab Sult, I replied him from the same angle and motive he set forth his query. Certainly, I heard my father narrate from his fathers that Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.) said: 'The prophet (s.a.w.a.) informed me: 'O Ali, you are the one distributing heaven and hell on .the day of resurrection

t:٧

.Since loves of Ali (a.s.) are dwellers of paradise and his enemies are dwellers in hell -١

(You would say to the Fire: He is from me and that one for you."(1)

b) Abdul-Azeem Hasani said: I asked Hazrat Javad (a.s.): My master, I hope you are that Qaem from the prophet's Ahl'ul-bayt who would fill the earth with equity and justice just as it would be filled with injustice and tyranny. Hazrat (a.s.) replied: "All of us rise (are Qaem) to Allah's commands and guide (the people) towards His religion. But the Qaem through whom Allah will cleanse the earth off infidelity and disbelief and fill it with equity and justice is someone whose birth is hidden and he is concealed from the people and they are forbidden from uttering his name. His name and agnomen is the same as the prophet's (s.a.w.a.) name and agnomen. He is someone for whom the earth will unfold its treasures and every hardship would be managed by him and his companions numbering ۳۱۳ men equal to the number of people of Badr would gather around him from near and far and these are Allah's words Who says: "."And wherever you are, Allah will gather you; verily Allah is Powerful over all things

When this number of people would collect with utmost sincerity, Allah will manifest the Qaem's affair. At that moment, his soldiers would number ten thousand and he will rise by Allah's command. He will fight Allah's enemies until the Almighty Allah (becomes pleased."(2)

It's worthy to mention that imparting and explaining matters in the form of question :and answer has the following advantages

a) It's beneficial to the questioner because the reply is mooted at his level of .knowledge and understanding

t:۸

Aimmahtuna ۲:۱۲۴, hadith ۱۱ -۱

Ehtejaj ۲:۴۴۹ -۲

a) Due to face-to-face discussion between addresser and addressee and brief reply, the matter remains in the mind of questioner.

b) Any extra saying that is not concerned with the questioner is avoided unless he personally requests for such additional information.

c) This manner enables the seeker of knowledge to learn better the style of questioning and he acquires his reply much quicker.

d) Usually, in question and answer form, the "matter under consideration is mooted as per time or era". In some scholarly matters, its roots and contents may be old but the style and form of question varies from time to time. For instance, question and answer acquaints a student about a matter that is appropriate of that time.

e) Very often, tens of questions of one questioner is solved and replied from various angles in one sitting.

f) In session of questions and answers, the questioner finds courage of setting forth his question and problem and take steps for finding their solution.

g) By question and answer, an affectionate relationship is established, particularly if conducted in oral and face-to-face manner. By friendly relation between the teacher and student, both can come to an intellectual agreement in a much better manner. The learner pursues the teacher and reaches perfection.

Respected readers, these and other unrevealed points have forced scholars throughout history to possess detailed writings in reply to questions of the people of their respective time. For instance, the late Shaikh Agha Bozorg Tehrani in Vol ۵ of his book "Az-Zariah" has

(recorded ۴۲۴ books under the title 'Reply' and ۲۵۰ books named as "Replies".(۱

One specimen of such book of the past is the writing of Shaikh Mufid named "Al-Masael al-Okbariyah" which in Vol ۶ of his collection of literary works, on page ۲۵ till ۱۳۵, he has arranged ۵۱ questions and answers on various topics like belief, tafsir, hadith and fiqh. Amongst the recent works, we can name the book "Al-Muraje'at" written by Sayyed Abdul-Husain Sharafuddin Musavi wherein is found questions and answers, discussions and debates in the form of ۱۱۲ letters on Shia and Sunni sect, Imamate and caliphate exchanged between him and Shaikh Sulaim Bushri, the head of Al-Azhar university of Egypt of that time.

By following the path of Qur'an and Imams as well as past scholars, this writer was instigated to set forth matters in the form of question and answers for the addressees. Thus, I hope the scholars give their guidelines and I hope Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) assists me and even though I don't find myself worthy of such work, nevertheless, I only intend to serve and express my gratitude towards my holy master and I hope for forgiveness and generosity.

SAYYED HUSAIN HUSAINI

t:۱۰

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۱ - From page ۱۷۱ till page ۱۹۵ (numbers ۴۷۴ till ۸۹۸) and from page ۱۹۵ till page ۲۴۱ (numbers ۸۹۹ till ۱۱۴۹)

Section:۱

Point

t:۱۲

:QUESTION ١

Verse ٢٨٥ from Sura Baqarah lays down the principles of a believer's faith. However, amongst these principles, nothing is mentioned about belief in Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). Similarly, verse ١٣۶ from Sura Nisa talks about infidelity and faith but we find no command about belief in Imam's existence nor does it specify that disbelief in Imam (a.t.f.s.) amounts to infidelity. Is belief in Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) one of the ?principles of faith and would disbelief in him lead one to infidelity

:REPLY

:We set forth below the two verses referred to in the query

آمن الرسول بما آيزل اليه من ربه والمؤمنون کل آمن بالله و ملآئکته و کتبه و رسله. لانفرق بین آحد من رسله و قالو: سمعنا و آطعنا. غفرانک ربنا و الیک المصیر.

t:١٣

THE APOSTLE BELIEVES IN WHAT HAS BEEN REVEALED TO HIM FROM HIS LORD" AND (SO DO) THE BELIEVERS; THEY ALL BELIEVE IN ALLAH AND HIS ANGELS AND HIS BOOKS AND HIS APOSTLES; WE MAKE NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ANY OF HIS APOSTLES; AND THEY SAY: WE HEAR AND OBEY, OUR LORD! THY FORGIVENESS (DO ".WE CRAVE), AND TO THEE IS THE EVENTUAL COURSE

يا آيها الـذين آمنوا آمنوا بالله و رسوله والكتاب الـذى نزل على رسوله والكتاب الذى آنزل من قبل و من يكفر بالله و ملائكته و كتبه و رسله واليوم الآخر فقد ضل ضلالا بعيدا.

O YOU WHO BELIEVE! BELIEVE IN ALLAH AND HIS APOSTLE AND THE BOOK WHICH" HE HAS REVEALED TO HIS APOSTLE AND THE BOOK WHICH HE REVEALED BEFORE; AND WHOEVER DISBELIEVES IN ALLAH AND HIS ANGELS AND HIS BOOK AND HIS ".APOSTLES AND THE LAST DAY, HE INDEED STRAYS OFF INTO A REMOTE ERROR

:Verse ۲۸۵ of Sura Baqarah

It's necessary to mention that the points stated in this noble verse do not specify the entire divine belief and faith. For instance, it does not mention about one of the fundamentals and necessities of faith i.e., 'Ma'ad and belief in resurrection. But, its absence does not abate its importance. It can be said: Belief in the Book and the messenger involves belief in resurrection and belief in 'Ma'ad' is integral to belief in .the Book and messenger and it is part of the necessities of divine religions

Just as absence of 'Ma'ad' in the above verse cannot become a reason or proof for non-acceptance of 'Ma'ad' as

t:۱۴

a fundamental belief, the same applies to belief in the Imams (a.s.) and Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). Besides, we have various other verses that talk about Imams (a.s.) .(.and Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s

:Verse ۱۳۶ of Sura Nisa

This verse consists of two parts: Positive and negative aspect. In the positive aspect, principle of faith is set forth. The All-Wise Allah commands to believe in four principles: .Allah, apostle, book of apostle and books of previous apostles

In the negative aspect, it says: Those who disbelieve in Allah, His angels, His Book and .apostles and the last day have strayed into a remote error

In this noble verse, we find ' Ma'ad ' while talking about disbelief in fundamentals of faith but in the topic concerning belief in fundamentals of faith nothing is mentioned about ' Ma'ad '. It's clear that each verse in every Sura is not bound to describe every principle and every aspect of fundamentals and branches of religion. In Sunni and Shiite traditions, principles like Salat, fasting, Haj etc form the religious teachings but none of these have come down in this noble verse. Their importance has come down .in other verses and traditions

The same applies to belief in the Imamate of Imams (a.s.) and their successors. This vital principle is pointed out in hundreds of verses in diverse forms and the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Imams (a.s.) have interpreted and explained them to imply Amir-ul-Mu'minin's (a.s.) ' Vilayat ' and Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) rule. Among them, :we may mention the following verses

t:۱۵

إنما وليكم الله............. (مائده : ۵۵)

اليوم آكملت لكم دينكم.....(مائده : ۴)

و جعلنا منهم آئمه..........(سجده : ۲۴)

يا آيها الرسول! بلغ ما آنزل...(مائده : ۶۷)

Aside from numerous traditions, our leaders have explained and interpreted these .verses too. Amongst them, we may name Tafsir-Burhan and Nur'us-Saqalain

To sum up, the holy Quran has explained some issues like principle of Imamate, prophethood, monotheism and resurrection clearly and openly but with regards to other issues like introduction of Imam, explanation of practical commandments etc it has left its explanation and interpretation with the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Imams (a.s.). Thus, one cannot expect all the matters to have come down in the holy Quran in clear and decisive terms (considering its apparent limitation in size too) and still further, expect one to believe that all the fundamentals of belief have come down in .one verse only

-:In this connection, you may refer to the following books

(Al-Muraje'at (Arabic -

Then I was guided -

Imamate and leadership -

Examination of Imamate in general -

Role of Imams in the revival of religion -

(The Ahl'ul-bayt faith.(Arabic -

(Lema-Za-Nahno Shiah? (Arabic -

- Ahl'ul-bayt Fil Quran (Arabic)

- The holy Imams or guardians of revelation in Quran.

- Ahl'ul-bayt or the sparkling figures in the verse on purity

- Ta'vil-ul-Ayaat-ul-Bahera Fi Fazl'ul-Etrat'ut-Taherah (Arabic)

- Tashreeh Wa Muhaakemah Dar Tarikh-e-Aale-Muhammad (s.a.w.a.).

t:۱۷

:QUESTION ۲

?(.Is there any verse or verses in the Quran about Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s

:REPLY

All the Islamic sciences have their sources in the holy Quran and as per Shiite belief; the fundamental of everything has its root in this divine book. The ' Vilayat ' (authority) of Amir-ul-Mu'minin, the status of Imams (a.s.) and the Imamate and rule of Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) all have their root in the holy Quran. As such, scholars of hadith , from past and present have left writings revealing traditions that have interpreted and explained the Quranic verses in honour of Ali (a.s.) and pure Imams particularly .(.Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s

Amongst them, the verses interpreted in all its dimensions concerning Imam-e--Zaman (a.t.f.s.) has been written down in the book "Al-Muhajjah-Fi-Ma-Nazala

t:۱۹

Fi'l-Qaem al-Hujjah (a.t.f.s.)(۱) written by Sayyed Hashim Bahrani, a scholar of ۱۱th and ۱۲th century A.H. He has set forth ۱۲۰ verses from the Quran and below each verse, narrated traditions that talk about the characteristics of Imam (a.t.f.s.) and program of his government. Here, suffice it is to mention three such verses:

۱. "ALLAH HAS PROMISED TO THOSE OF YOU WHO BELIEVE AND DO GOOD THAT HE WILL MOST CERTAINLY MAKE THEM RULERS IN THE EARTH..................."(۲)

Under this verse, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says:

" This saying of Allah: "Allah has promised......" has been revealed about the 'Qaem' and his followers ."(۳)

Similarly, Imam Sajjad (a.s.) after reciting this verse said:

" I swear by Allah, they are our Shias. By means of a man from us (who is the Mahdi of this Ummah), Allah will make them rulers in the earth. In same regard, the prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: 'If not more than one day remains from the life of this world, Allah will extend that day so much that a man from my progeny would gain authority over it and his name is the same as my name. He will fill the earth with equity and justice just as it would be filled with cruelty and tyranny ."(۴)

t:۲۰

۱- Dar The translation of this book titled "Seemaye Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) Quran has been published by Afagh publications.

۲- NUR (۲۴) : ۵۵

۳- Al-Muhajjah: ۱۴۸

۴- Ibid: ۱۵۱-۱۵۲

WHAT REMAINS WITH ALLAH IS BETTER FOR YOU IF YOU ARE BELIEVERS, AND I " .١
(AM NOT A KEEPER OVER YOU."(١

:Under this verse we read as follows

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) was asked: 'Will the Qaem be greeted by the title 'Amir-ul-
".....Mu'minin? Imam (a.s.) replied: "No, this is name reserved by Allah for Ali (a.s.) only

?I said: Then how will the Qaem be greeted

Imam (a.s.) replied: People will say: السلام علیک یا بقیه الله

Thereafter, Imam (a.s.) recited (this verse):(٢) "بقیه الله خیر لکم...."

THIS BOOK, THERE IS NO DOUBT IN IT, IS A GUIDE TO THOSE WHO GUARD" .٢
((AGAINST EVIL) AND THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN THE UNSEEN......."(٣

Below this verse, it is stated that Yahya-ibn-Abi'l Qasem says: 'I requested Imam
:Sadiq (a.s.) to explain this verse. He (a.s.) said

In this verse, 'those who guard (against evil) are Ali's (a.s.) Shiites and 'Ghaib'"
((unseen) refers to the hidden Hujjat."(۴

-:About this topic, you may refer to the following

(Al-Muhajjah-Fi-Ma-Nazala-Fi'l-Qaem al-Hujjah (Arabic -

t:٢١

HUD (١١) : ٨۶ -١

Nur-ul-Saqalain ٢: ٣٩٠, tradition ١٩٠ -٢

BAQARAH (٢) : ٢ -٣

Al-Muhajjah : ١۶ -۴

- Seemaye Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) Dar Quran

- (Al-Mahdi-Fi'l Quran (Arabic

- .Mauoode-Quran

- Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۱:۴۴-۶۴

- (Khorshid-Maghreb: ۱۱۳-۱۴۸ (۷th and ۸th chapters

- Al-Mahdi: ۲۳-۲۵

- (Yaade-Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) : ۵۳-۷۴ (second section

t:۲۲

:QUESTION ٣

Have other religions too given glad-tiding about the manifestation of a just saviour or this belief restricted to Islam only? What are the specialities of this saviour and the ?promised Mahdi in Islam and particularly so in Shia'sm

:REPLY

As per information at hand, all the religions and books have given glad-tidings about the world saviour and reformer in some way or the other. We have explained some of :the prophecies in our reply to other queries. In this regard, refer to

- Anis'ul-A'laam

- Besharate-Ah'dain (Glad-tidings of the two testament), pages ٢٣٤-٢٨۶

The other religions and past divine books have discussed the saviour's qualities and characteristics to the

t:٢٣

.(same extent as they have discussed about his ' Zuhoor ' (manifestation

In this regard, it's a great honour that Islam and particularly Shiasm has in hand all the dimensions concerning the saviour's qualities, ranks, concealment, manifestation at individual and social level and all these narrated from the immaculate Imams (a.s.). We have information about the saviour before birth, after birth, during childhood period, his life with his father and after his father's departure from this world, the lesser concealment period, the greater concealment period, 'zuhoor' (manifestation) .etc and all these can be found in detail in numerous reliable traditions

In this regard, you may refer to Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۲۵۱, ۲۸۴, ۲۸۶, ۲۹۰, ۳۰۰, ۳۰۲, ۳۰۴, ۳۰۵...........

In other sects of Islam and Sunni books, their scholars too have written exclusive ."books on Hazrat like "Al-Arfo-Wardi", "Eqdud-Durar" and "Al-Wahmul-Maknun

Numerous traditions concerning this matter have also come down in Sihahe-Sitta and other books written by non-Shiite scholars. Index of such books appears in the first ."section of "Muntakhab-ul-Athar" as well as "In search for the Qaem

-:For more detailed account, please refer to the following books

.Khorshid-Maghreb, ۴th and ۵th chapters -

Asalat-e-Mahdaviyat -

Zehniyat-e-Mustashraqin -

.Dar-Fajr-Sahel, section concerning glad tidings -

t:۲۴

- Mau'ood-e-Roozgaran

- Ruzgaar-e-Raha'ee, ۱۳th section.

- Daneshmandan Aammeh Wa Mahdi Mau'ood.

- Al-Mahdi al-Mau'ood al-Muntazar Enda Ulama Ahl'us-Sunnat Wa'l Imamiah.

- Khorshid-e-Penhaan, sixth saying.

- ۱۷th section (Yaade-Mahdi: ۲۷۵-۳۱۱)

t:۲۵

:QUESTION ۴

The holy Quran has not confined the Imams to twelve in number. In a 'dua' come down in the Quran we ask Allah about Imamate. It says: و اجعلنا للمتقين إماما : "O ALLAH... AND MAKE US GUIDES TO THOSE WHO GUARD (AGAINST EVIL)."(۱) In another place it says: "و جعلناهم آئمه يهدون بآمرنا" ("AND WE MADE THEM IMAMS WHO GUIDED (PEOPLE) BY OUR COMMAND."(۲)). At another place, it calls the prophets as Imams and still further mentions that the unbelievers too have Imams: "فقاتلوا آئمه الكفر إنهم لا آيمان لهم" ("THEN FIGHT THE LEADERS OF UNBELIEF – SURELY THEIR OATHS ARE NOTHING."(۳)) In one way, all the oppressed ones during Firaun's era are Imams. So the Imams are not twelve in number. How can we say Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) is the ۱۲th Imam?

:REPLY

t:۲۷

۱- Furqan (۲۵):۷۴

۲- ANBIYA (۲۱):۷۳

۳- BARAAT (۹):۱۲

In these set of verses, the status of Imamate is used. In the holy Quran, two types of .Imamate are mooted. Imamate of fire and Imamate of light

:About the Imam of fire, it says

"AND WE MADE THEM IMAMS WHO CALL TO THE FIRE"(1)

:About the Imams of light, it says

"AND WE MADE THEM IMAMS WHO GUIDED (PEOPLE) BY OUR COMMAND."(2)

If someone casts a glance into the Quran, he will accept Imamate. The holy Imams (a.s.) too have rationalized this very matter and said: "This lofty status is exclusively :earmarked for a few because Allah says

"O IBRAHIM, SURELY I WILL MAKE YOU AN IMAM OF THE PEOPLE. IBRAHIM (VERY ENTHUSIASTICALLY) SAID: AND OF MY OFFSPRING? (ALLAH SAID): MY COVENANT DOES NOT INCLUDE THE UNJUST."(3)

:Here, Imam Reza (a.s.) says

"The status of Imamate is so lofty that Allah bestowed it to Ibrahim only after consistent tests and after bestowing him with the position of prophethood and messengership and after earning the title "Khaleel"(4) So how can people select this position for themselves!?(5)

For this reason, this status is especially reserved for divine saints. The holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Imams (a.s.) have declared them to be twelve in number after the prophet (s.a.w.a.) and specified their names as well. In the

t:۲۸

۱- Qasas (۲۸) : ۴۱

۲- Anbiya (۲۱) : ۷۳

۳- Baqarah (۲) : ۱۲۴

۴- An intimate friend

Usul-Kafi ۱:۱۹۹, tradition ۱ -۵

Shiite and Sunni traditions, their number is stated to be equal to the number of Bani-Israel leaders; equal to number of Isa's disciples, equal to number of zodiacs, equal to .(number of months (which are twelve in number

These traditions come down in Shiite and Sunni books are all ' Mutawatir ' (i.e., widely transmitted). The vital question is that who are these twelve specified personalities? It's mentioned in Shiite and Sunni traditions that "all of them are from Quraish"(۱) In external verification of the twelve Imams, there are two explanations: The Sunnis speak in a scattered manner but the Shiites say: 'As per ' Mutawatir' traditions from the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.), the names and specifications of these twelve personalities till Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) are known and clear. We can find few of such Shiite .traditions in detailed form in "Usul-e-Kafi" Vol ۱, pages ۵۲۵-۵۳۵ and pages ۲۸۶-۳۲۸

This brief discussion clarifies that the Imamate of light come down in the noble verses is a special status and an exceptional station selected by Allah and nobody can acquire it by himself. The holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) has expressed in various forms their number to be twelve. All of them are from the Quraish and according to Shiite and some Sunni traditions (like the ones come down in Yanabi'ul-Muwadda, page ۴۴۰ as .per narration of Muntakhab-ul-Athar, page ۹۷) all their names too are specified

t:۲۹

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۱۰ onwards narrating from Sahih-Bukhari, Sahih-Tirmizi, - ۱ .Sahih-Muslim, Sahih-Davoud etc

differs from whatever we have said "و اجعلنا للمتقين إماما" :Consequently, the noble verse about the special status of Imamate in Quran. The Imamate discussed in the preceding verses is a special status and position and the Imamate in verse ۷۵ from Sura Furqan has been used in the literal sense to denote leadership for the pious .ones

Besides, assuming that in this verse too, Imam is used in technical and not literal sense yet it applies to the immaculate Imams (a.s.) who were specified by the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.). In other words, the esoteric interpretation of this verse concerns the holy Imams (a.s.). A tradition from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) substantiates our viewpoint. :Imam (a.s.) says

(Allah has meant us."(۱) , "و اجعلنا للمتقين إماما" :In verse"

For this topic, you may refer to 'Ahkereen-Tahavvul" : ۱۱۷-۱۳۹

t:۳۰

Tafsir Al-Mizan ۱۵:۲۷۰; discussion from viewpoint of traditions (narrated from - ۱ ("Jama'e'ul-Jama'e

:QUESTION ۵

?(.Please give a detailed explanation about the names of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s

:REPLY

Aside from name (which is common amongst all), the Arabs also use title and agnomen. Among the Arabs, it was and is still a custom for an individual to have a .name, title and agnomen

Some believe that "م ح م د" :Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) possesses one special name during his concealment, one should use his special name and a few say: 'The prohibition of using his name goes back to the lesser concealment period when Hazrat feared he would be recognized. We have narrated the related tradition in our .reply to another query

Hazrat (a.t.f.s.) possesses various titles such as Mahdi, Hujjat, Qaem, Saheb-uz-Zaman, Muntazer, and Muntazar . A title is given after considering its meaning.

t:۳۱

(اب) 'He has one ' kunya ' (agnomen) too. In the Arab culture, 'k unya ' is related to 'Ab is أَب ,appears before 'kunya' and in case of men أُم ,In case of ladies .(ام) 'or 'Umm used. For example, they say: Abu-Zar- Abu-Abdullah- Abu'l-Qasi- Abu'l-Fazl and in case of women: Umm-Salma- Umm-ul-Baneen- Umm-Kulsum- Umm-Abiha. 'K unya ' does not necessarily require that for example a father should have a son named ('Abdullah' so that he can be given the 'kunya': Abu-Abdullah...(۱)

Aba-Saleh). It does not necessarily) ابا صالح One of Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) 'kunya' is .mean that he should possess a son named Saleh

Abu-Saleh' (or 'Aba-Saleh' or 'Abi-Saleh') means someone who possesses abundant' .goodness so much so that as if goodness is borne from him

Thus, in case of children, ' kunya ' is used for two reasons: One reason may be in hope that they would have a child so that they are given that name. Another reason is that some outstanding qualities may be seen in him which is expressed in the form of 'kunya'. The one who distribute food among the poor is called 'Abul-Qasim'; the one who helps is called 'Abu-Hashim'(۲) and an eatable that is

t:۳۲

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۱ - A 'kunya' may also be given to the concerned person because of his special (attribute or perfection (editor

۲ - The term 'Hashim' itself is name of subject of 'Hashm' meaning 'to sop' (for example bread crumbled in soup). The high-ranking forefather of holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) i.e., Hazrat Amr-ibn-Abd-Munaf was given this title because of unprecedented generosity exhibited by him during famine. He helped the people and (saved them from starvation. (editor

refreshing and tasty (like falooda) is named 'Abu-Sa'egh' (sa'egh means very .(refreshing

One of Imam Husain's (a.s.) 'kunya ' is "Abu-Abdullah". It does not mean he should necessarily possess a son named Abdullah though he did possess one. "Abdullah" means Allah's slave. It means he has reached the peak in serving Allah and he is the .father of Allah's slaves

This was one matter about names, titles and agnomens. Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) possesses many titles and agnomens because the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.), the Imams (a.s.) and Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) [right from the time he gave glad-tiding about the existence of last Imam] have used various titles for him. The famous traditionist Haj .(.Mirza Husain Nuri had narrated ۱۸۲ names and titles for Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s

:For a more detailed account, you may refer to

- .Najm-e-Saqeb, chapter two

- Naame-Mahboob

- Muntahi'ul-Aamaal ۲:۷۵۷

- Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) from birth till manifestation: ۴۴:۵۷

t:۳۳

:QUESTION ۶

Salutation by upon you O the) ....السلام علیک یا داعی الله :In Ziarat-e-Aale-Yasin, we recite one inviting (people) towards Allah!) whereas the holy Quran says Allah's messenger .is the one inviting people towards Allah

:REPLY

Undoubtedly, one of the qualities and specialities of Allah's messenger is to invite :people towards Allah. He (Allah) says

یا آیُها اليبی! اینا آرسلناک شاهدا و مبشرا و نذيرا و داعيا الی الله باذنه و سراجا منيرا

O PROPHET! SURELY WE HAVE SENT YOU AS A WITNESS, AND AS A BEARER OF" GOOD NEWS AND AS A WARNER, AND AS ONE INVITING TO ALLAH BY HIS (PERMISSION, AND AS A LIGHT-GIVING TORCH." (۱

t:۳۵

AHZAB (۳۳) : ۴۵ ۴۶ -۱

In spite of this, the aforesaid verse does not draw any limitation and exclusivity and does not say that 'invitation' is confined merely to the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.). Besides, in the following verses this state (of inviting people towards Allah) is applied to others :too. For example

و من آحسن قولا ممن دعا الى الله و عمل صالحا و قال: انى من المسلمين

AND WHO SPEAKS BETTER THAN HE WHO CALLS TO ALLAH WHILE HE HIMSELF" (DOES GOOD AND SAYS: I AM SURELY OF THOSE WHO SUBMIT."(١)

Moreover, in Shiite and Sunni traditions, great emphasis is laid to invite people :towards goodness. For instance

كونوا دعاه الناس بغير آلسنتكم

CALL THE PEOPLE TOWARDS RELIGION; NOT WITH YOUR TONGUE (BUT" (DEEDS)."(٢)

We see our noble Imams commanding us to invite the people towards goodness. In inviter) "داعى الى الله" reality, every missionary of religion and inviter of goodness is towards Allah) and the most perfect exemplar are the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) and .Imams (a.s.) who call the people towards none but Allah

: (.In Ziarat-e- Jame'ah, we read about the immaculate Imams (a.s

t:٣۶

١- HA-MIM (۴١):٣٣

٢- BIHAR-UL-ANWAR ٧٠:٣٠٣

"السلام علی الدعاه الی الله

".PEACE BY UPON THE INVITERS TOWARDS ALLAH"

To sum up, Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) calls the people towards Allah. This attribute is not confined to any prophet or Imam but all the Apostles and Imams call the people .towards Allah

t:۳۷

:QUESTION ۷

When was Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) born? There exist diverse sayings about ۱۵th Shaban. In Vol ۵۱ of Bihar-ul-Anwar, various dates are mentioned like: ۲۴th Ramazan, ۹th Rabi'ul-Awwal, ۱۵th Ramazan, ۳rd Shaban, ۸th Shaban and Thursday night of ?Ramazan. Anyhow, what is the date of his birth

:REPLY

There exists difference of opinion in numerous vital historical events and incidents such as births, martyrdoms, wars and reign. Difference about birth of someone who was born at the time when tyrant rulers kept strict vigilance over him is something natural. It is likely that in order to save Hazrat's life and out of dissimulation, the Imams (a.s.) celebrated his birth with such differences and they didn’t reveal its actual truth. Obviously, if the Imams (a.s.) had exactly specified the date before Hazrat's birth or even at the time of his birth, then the state of Imam Hasan Askari's family who were severely besieged

t:۳۹

would still worsen. But the Imams (a.s.) wished to keep secret Hazrat's (a.s.) date of birth. Thus, there arose differences after Hazrat's birth

This difference reveals the strict control exerted by the Abbasid caliphs. They would send agents to Imam Hasan Askari's house and search the women to find out if any among them was pregnant. They feared the birth of the promised one of Islam who would destroy their throne and crown.

Now that we are passing the stage of major concealment after the lapse of minor concealment and Hazrat continues to thrive and live, today, the Shiites have investigated and reached a decisive conclusion that ۱۵th Shaban is more evident and correct. For this reason, in spite of differences in the day, month and year of birth, the Shiites have selected and supported only one date.

Thus, at the start, the idea was to keep Hazrat's birth concealed and one way for it was to keep difference in the date of birth where none would realize its exact date. The same is the case with Hazrat Zahra's (a.s.) grave. Some say her grave is in Baqi; some say she was buried in her own house and yet others say she was buried besides the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.). So it's obvious that when something is concealed, differences would come up.

Can this difference in date of birth lead one to believe that Hazrat didn't exist at all?!

Such reasoning is like saying, 'Difference of opinion about Hazrat Fatema's grave is a proof that she wasn't martyred and that she doesn't possess a grave at all.'

t:۴۰

If it's decided to keep an event concealed, then this ambiguity will certainly rise. There exists difference in the holy prophet's (s.a.w.a.) birth as well. Majority of the Sunnis believe his date of birth to be ۱۲th Rabi'ul-Awwal while the Shiites believe it to be ۱۷th .Rabi'ul-Awwal

If we look at history, we fill find many differences concerning birth, death and numerous other historical events. Are they proofs that such personalities did not live in history? Or is this difference itself a proof that such personalities did live but with .some difference in opinion about some events related to them

-:About Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) birth, refer to the below-mentioned books

- Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۱:۲-۲۸

- Muntahi'ul-Aamaal ۲:۷۴۵

- Discussions on Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), chapter ۳

- Najme-Saqeb: ۲۳

- Ruzgaar-e-Reha'ee ۱:۱۳۷

- Khorshid-e-Maghreb: ۱۸

- Selection of "Kifayat'ul-Muhtadah": ۱۴۴

- Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) from birth till manifestation: ۱۳۳-۱۷۳

t:۴۱

:QUESTION ۸

all the Imams are one light).) كلهم نور واحد :Please explain about this tradition or saying If this saying is correct then how can one justify the difference of Imam Mahdi's ?(.position with other Imams (a.s

:REPLY

:The wordings that appear in tradition says

كلنا واحد من نور واحد

(Bihar-ul-Anwar ۲۶: ۱۶ ۲۸۱)

It implies that they nurture from one source of light. In their original creation, they are from one light. In the world of spirits and shadow, their derivation is from one source .one light) refers to the light of Allah's Greatness) نور واحد leading to one truth. That

t:۴۳

Traditions say that the souls or spirits of Imams (a.s.) are higher than " Elliyeen " (۱) and their bodies from " Elliyeen ". The souls of Shiites are from " Elliyeen " and their bodies lower than " Elliyeen ".(۲) Moreover, the programs and responsibilities of Imams (a.s.) all belong to the world of revelation and their beliefs, ethics and deed are all divine and human. Their main policy in life is perfect devotion and submission before the Almighty Allah even though their eras differ from one another and their .duties varies from one another

Thus, Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) duty differs from all other Imams (a.s.) mainly due to .his implementation of the Islamic commandments in the entire world

Their appointment by Allah and their immaculateness is something common in all of them. Also, all of them are medium or channel through which the living creatures derive benefits. Besides, they are all deeply rooted in knowledge and are interpreters of the holy Quran. Lastly, they bear the responsibility of safeguarding religion from .heresy

:For more knowledge about Imam's recognition, refer to

Usul-e-Kafi ۱: ۱۶۸-۵۴۸ -

Ma'refate-Mahboob -

Ma'refate-Imame-Asr -

t:۴۴

A special luminous material that forms the main source of creation of those - ۱ .nearest to Allah and we haven't adequate information on this subject

Bihar-ul-Anwar ۲۵:۸, tradition ۱۲ -۲

- Selection from "Kifayat'ul-Muhtadah"

- Imamate Wa Mahdaviyat, Vol ۲, Ma'refate-Hujjat

- Wabastegeehe Jahan bar Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.)

- Discussions on Imam-e-Zaman

t:۴۵

:QUESTION ۹

Is ' ghaibat ' (concealment) specific to the ۱۲th Imam (a.t.f.s.) or has its precedence in ?the past Imams and prophets

:REPLY

Ghaibat ' in the sense of absolute concealment from human perceptive senses (the ' faculty, intellect, illusion and imagination) is exclusive to God only. Aside from this, we also have relative ' ghaibat' (concealment) and in this regard, none among the prophets and Imams had constant presence for all the people in all the societies and each one had a relative presence and relative concealment. Basically, any human-being falls in this category. A group of people meet and associate with him while .another group do not do so

In traditions, Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) state during concealment is likened to the past :prophets. In this regard, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says

".In our Qaem are signs of Musa-ibn-Imran"

?Narrator says: I asked: What are the signs

t:۴۷

(Imam (a.s.) replied: 'His secret birth and his concealment from others ....."(1)

Also, narrator says: I heard Imam Baqir (a.s.) who said: 'The master of the affairs possesses signs of four prophets (a.s.): ....his sign from Musa is fear and ' entezar ' ((awaiting) [during concealment]."(2)

Therefore, the story of concealment and secret living has precedence among the past prophets and messengers.

Shaikh Saduq has set forth traditions about concealment of past prophets like Idris, Nuh, Saleh, Ibrahim, Yusuf and Musa (a.s.) and has proven their ' ghaibat ' in some way or the other.(3)

About ' Ghaibat ' (concealment), refer to the following books:

- Khorshid-e-Maghreb, chapter ۳.
- Ruzgaar-e-Reha'ee, section ۴, ۵, ۷, ۸ and ۹.
- Khorshid-e-Penhan: ۲۴۹-۲۵۸
- Al-Mahdi (Arabic): ۱۵۵-۱۸۹
- Dar-Fajr-Sahel, chapter concerning despair and hope.
- Kamaluddin (Arabic)
- Ghaibat-Nu'mani (Arabic)
- Ghaibat-Shaikh Tusi (Arabic)
- Dah-Enteqad-Wa-Pursesh
- Tarikh al-Ghaibat'ul-Sughra (Arabic)

t:۴۸

۱- Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۱: ۲۱۶, tradition ۲

Ibid: ۵۲: ۳۱۶, tradition ۳ -۲

Kamaluddin: ۱۲۷-۱۴۵ -۳

- Tarikh al-Ghaibat'ul-Kubra

- Nuveed-e-Amn Wa Aman: ۱۴۵-۲۰۶ (section ۲۵)

- Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) hamasa'e Az-Nur: ۴۵-۵۲ (section ۳).

t:۴۹

:QUESTION ١٠

Among the Imams (a.s.) why only Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) has ' ghaibat' ?' (concealment)? What is the reason and philosophy behind this ' ghaibat

:REPLY

There exists a difference between reason and philosophy. Reason is a philosophical term and implies a cause for something coming into existence. Thus it's said: 'There exists a necessary link between cause and effect in the world of existence and non-existence. The existence of cause (reason) is necessary and is accompanied with .existence of effect. The presence of effect too shows the existence of cause

The point is that it's not easy for the human mind to understand the real reason (cause) of Islamic commandments. When the Imams (a.s.) are asked about the reason for 'ghaibat' (concealment) they reply: 'Allah knows' or they quote this verse: " (Do not put questions about things which if declared to you may trouble you ."(١

t:٥١

Maeda (٥):١٠١ and Bihra-ul-Anwar ٥٢:٩٢ -١

This is because the absolute reason and various dimension of any affair are unknown .to all but Allah

Thus, the reason (cause) for 'ghaibat' is a matter which either present or absent, 'ghaibat' revolves around that matter. By its presence, 'ghaibat' continues to prevail and by its absence or removal, 'ghaibat' comes to an end. Such thorough knowledge concerning what is the matter of 'ghaibat' and when it would come to an end is not known to anyone but Allah or someone chosen by Him. In spite of this, our immaculate Imams (a.s.) have pointed out in traditions several philosophies behind 'ghaibat'. They never engaged in explaining the complete and ultimate cause and instead brought witness from the holy Quran by reciting this verse: " And do not put " questions about things which if declared to you may trouble you

Philosophy is that first and foremost phenomenon in which the second phenomenon, in its initial formation, revolves around it. But in the world of non-existence and continuation of life, it doesn't revolve around it. It's possible that philosophy might get destroyed and the second phenomenon still continue to live or the philosophy might .have existence but not so the second phenomenon

Therefore, the main reason for 'ghaibat' will be known after 'zuhoor' (manifestation) [Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۲:۹۱]. This lofty and concealed reason has been likened to the incident of Khizr (a.s.) and Musa (a.s.) where after completion of Khizr's mission, its (.philosophies became clear for Hazrat Musa (a.s

t:۵۲

In order to make the questioners understand that it's not possible to have thorough knowledge of all the commandments and phenomenon, the Imams (a.s.) have used (philosophy) and reminded us of a few points:(۱) "حکمت" the term

۱) Testing and sifting the people

۲) Fear of being killed if Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) had constant appearance and consequently would lead to non-implementation of his Imamate duties.

۳) Various human schools of thought coming into existence and their failure and defeat and the preparedness of the people in accepting Hazrat's manifestation and global government.

۴) Living securely and remaining aloof from giving allegiance to the tyrant rulers.

About the philosophy or wisdom of 'ghaibat', you may refer to the following books:-

- Bihanr-ul-Anwar ۵۲:۹۱-۱۰۰ (chapter ۲۰)

- Kamaluddin: ۲۲:۲۳

- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۳۳۰-۳۳۸ (chapter ۲۸ ۲۹)

- Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) from birth till manifestation: ۱۸۴-۱۹۴

- Imamate Wa Mahdaviyat ۳:۱۱۵-۱۵۰

- Ghaibat-e-Nu'mani: ۱۴۰-۱۹۴ (chapter ۱۰)

- Discussions on Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), chapter ۵

- Najm-e-Saqeb: ۱۳۷

t:۵۳

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۱ - Even though in few traditions, the term 'reason' is used by them. However, by reason, they don't mean philosophical reason (in the sense we had described earlier)

but common reason. For example, the traditions come down in "Elal'ush-Sharayeh" of .Shaikh Saduq

:QUESTION ١١

While remembering Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), why don't we utter his real name (due to strict prohibition found in few Shiite traditions) and we call him by titles and agnomens ?like "Mahdi", "Qaem Aale-Muhammad", "Hujjat'ullah", "Baqiyat'allah etc

:REPLY

Prohibition from uttering his special name has its roots in traditions. In Kafi, book of Al-Hujjah, Kulaini has opened a chapter named باب فی النهی عن الاسم (chapter concerning prohibition from uttering name). He has narrated four traditions in it and Allamah Majlisi, while commenting on these four traditions has authenticated two of them.(١)

Muhaddes Nuri has brought ١٣ traditions in second chapter of his book "Najm-e-Saqeb" which all show that it's impermissible to utter the special name. Here, we shall :set forth only one tradition

t:٥٥

Mera'atul-Uqool ۴:١۶ -١

Aban-ibn-Sult narrates from Imam Reza (a.s.) that he was asked about the "Qaem". (Imam (a.s.) replied: "His body wouldn't be seen and his name wouldn't be uttered."(١)

That which is certain and decisive is that utterance of Hazrat's special name was prohibited till the end of lesser concealment considering the interests of that period. In the past, the immaculate Imams (a.s.) refrained from disclosing his name except to a few special Shiites and content themselves with various titles and agnomens. However, after the start of greater concealment, some scholars and jurisprudents have considered it permissible to utter Hazrat's name although they consider its abandonment a precautionary measure as a form of respect for those set of .traditions that prohibit it

Today, our duty is to act upon the traditions and Sunnah and the views of majority of the jurisprudences and scholars on hadith . Although as per a few, the philosophy and reason for prohibition of uttering name has ceased, the endless interests and harms stated in divine commandments and man's meager knowledge and lack of complete dominance over all of them necessitates us to take precautionary measures and not .to utter Imam's name

For this reason, we too follow the steps of high-ranking scholars on hadith and refrain and remember and call him by various "م ح م د" from uttering Imam's special name :titles and seek his help by saying

t:۵۶

Najm-e-Saqeb: ۷۴, tradition ۶ -۱

يا آيها العزيز! مسنا و آهلنا الضر و جئنا ببضاعه مزجاه فآوف لنا الكيل و تصدق علينا ان الله يجزى المتصدقين

O CHIEF! DISTRESS HAS AFFLICTED US AND OUR FAMILY AND WE HAVE BROUGHT " SCANTY MONEY, SO GIVE US FULL MEASURE AND BE CHARITABLE TO US; SURELY ALLAH REWARDS THE CHARITABLE."(۱)

:About prohibition from uttering Hazrat's name, refer to the following books-

Usul-e-Kafi ۱:۳۳۲ -

Translation of Usul-e-Kafi ۲:۱۲۶ -

Mera'atul-Uqool ۴:۱۶ -

Najm-e-Saqeb ۷۲, tradition ۱-۱۳ -

t:۵۷

YUSUF (۱۲):۸۸ -۱

:QUESTION ۱۲

Please describe the names, number and specifications of Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) .envoys

:REPLY

As per historical narration, the reliable and trustworthy persons who frequently visited Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) mainly during the lesser concealment were manifold. :But the most famous amongst them were four in number

ABU-AMR-UTHMAN-IBN-SAEED-IBN-AMR-ASADI

ABU-JAFAR-MUHAMMAD-IBN-UTHMAN-IBN-SAEED-AMRI

ABUL-QASIM HUSAIN-IBN-RUH-IBNE-ABI-BAHRE-NAUBAKHTI

(ABUL-HASAN ALI-IBN-MUHAMMAD-SAMORI (OR SAMARI OR SEMMARI

These envoys of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) and their deputyship possessed the same power and authority as the one given to them by Imam Hadi (a.s.) and Imam Askari -(a.s.). In order to make the people habituated with Imam

t:۵۹

e-Zaman's concealment, they too would fulfil the people's task and affairs through .their own appointed agents

During the ۶۹ years of Imam's minor concealment period, these envoys, while protecting the secrets of Imamate, would fulfil the needs of the Shiites related to their beliefs and ordinances through Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). During this period, the place of Imam-e-Zaman as well as the envoys was never revealed and thus nobody was arrested. These envoys kept secret this matter to such extent that it's said if their flesh was cut to pieces so that they would reveal Imam's place, they would never do .so

Aside from their secret-keeping and trustworthiness, these envoys were special friends of the household of Imamate and Vilayat and they were wise, intellectual and pious. The people would put forward their queries and receive correct replies from their living Imam through these envoys and via letters. Besides, by means of some letters that were written by pen without ink, they would gain certainty about the connection these envoys had with Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). Now we shall set forth a :short description about each of these envoys

Uthaman-ibn-Saeed was among the students and followers of the tenth and .۱ eleventh Imam and had the mandate from both these Imams (a.s.). He gained the honour of serving the prophet's household from age eleven and won the confidence and trust of three Imams (a.s.). He lived in a military place close to Imam Hadi and Imam Askari. He was Imam-e-Zaman's envoy for several years. He died and was .buried in Baghdad. It is said he died after ۲۶۰ A.H

t:۶۰

Muhammad-ibn-Uthman son of first envoy. He died in ٣٠٥ A.H. and was buried in .١ Baghdad. He was amongst the followers of eleventh and twelfth Imam and was praised by both Imams (a.s.). He held the post of deputyship for approximately forty .years

Hazrat Baqiyat'ullah (a.t.f.s.) issued several ' Tauqeehs ' (decrees) in honour of the second envoy and his father which can be found in their proper sources.(١) These ' Tauqeehs ' reveal the lofty position of these two envoys in the eyes of Imam-e-Asr .(.(a.t.f.s

Husain-ibn-Ruh-Naubakhti belonged to the family of Bani-Naubakht. This envoy of .٢ Iranian nationality died in ٣٢۶ A.H. He won the confidence of Muhammad-ibn-Uthman and helped him during the last two years of his life. As per Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) .instructions, Muhammad-ibn-Uthman assigned him the post of deputyship

Ali-ibn-Muhammad-Samiri died in ٣٢٩ A.H. (start of major concealment) and was .٣ buried in Baghdad. He is contemporary to Muhammad-ibn-Yaqub Kulaini author of Al-.Kafi

These envoys would receive queries and problems from the Shiites and present them before Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). Later, they would submit the replies to the people. Due to fear from the ruling caliph's tyranny they

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Kalemat'ul Imam-Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), vol ١ -١

lived in dissimulation and didn't reveal their relationship with Imam (a.t.f.s.) except to the noble Shiites and wise secret-preserving followers. During the last stage of the fourth deputy's life, he received a letter from Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) stating: "…….the major concealment has begun and there wouldn't be any deputyship any longer. Do not appoint anyone to the post of deputyship and you would die within six ".days

:(' The following is the text of this letter (' tauqeeh

"بسم الله الرحمان الرحيم

يا على بن محمد السمرى آعظم

.In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful"

O Ali-ibn-Muhammad Samori, may Allah give reward to your brethren in the matter" of your death! You will depart from this world within six days. So arrange and complete your affairs and do not make any will to appoint anyone as your successor because, 'the major ghaibat' (concealment) shall commence and 'zuhoor' (manifestation) wouldn't occur except if the Almighty Allah gives permission and that would be after long years of darkness when hearts will turn into stones and the land filled with injustice and cruelty. Soon, some will claim before our Shiites about our meeting. Before the rise of Sufyani and the heavenly cry, such malicious claimers will ".fabricate lies and there is no power and might but that of Almighty Allah

On the one hand, the content of this ' Tauqee ' closes the chapter of special .deputyship and informs the people about the commencement of major concealment

t:۶۲

On the other hand, it rejects the claims during major concealment by those claiming to know Hazrat's place and their ability in visiting Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) whenever they desire so. Of course this does not mean that Hazrat wouldn't manifest himself .before his fascinated lovers and the door of visitation would come to a close

After six days, Imam's prediction turned into a reality. He departed this world and .from that day (۳۲۹ A.H.) the major concealment commenced

-:In this regard, you may refer to

- Kalemat'ul Imam Mahdi ۱: ۱۳۹-۱۶۲

- .Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) from birth till manifestation, chapter nine

- (Khorshid-e-Maghreb: ۴۱-۵۰ (chapter ۳

- (Discussions on Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.): ۶۵-۸۰ (chapters ۵ ۶

- Ruzgaar-e-Reha'ee: ۱: ۲۹۱-۳۰۷

- Al-Abqari'ul-Hesaan ۲: ۲۱-۲۸

t:۶۳

:QUESTION ۱۳

Can one meet Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) during the major concealment? If the answer is in the affirmative then how does it reconcile with Hazrat's ' tauqee ' wherein he addresses his last special envoy Ali-ibn-Muhammad Samiri and says, 'Anyone claiming to meet me prior to the rise of Sufyani and the heavenly cry is a liar and .scandalmonger

:REPLY

Undoubtedly, there exists the possibility of meeting Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) during the major concealment. The best proof is the occurrence of such incidents in the length of history of the major concealment. The writings of scholars of hadith right from the oldest books till the current ones are full of narrations about such meetings .that have occurred during minor and major concealment period

The vital point lies here that whether such meetings and contacts occur as per our ?(.wish and intention or the discretion lies with Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s

t:۶۵

Experience reveals as well as the sentence of Imam's ' tauqee ' addressed to Ali-ibn-Muhammad Samiri shows that such contacts occur due to Imam's will and permission and not because of people's wish. This is exactly one of the meanings of minor and major concealment (' ghaibat '). That which has been negated in Imam's ' tauqee ' is bilateral contacts by the will of the common people (so that the door of deputyship etc .(is closed

which shows that there wouldn't فلاـ ظهور إلا بعـد إذن الله :In ' tauqee ' we find these words be any ' zuhoor ' (manifestation) except if Allah wishes. Such type of meeting is negated otherwise there isn't the least doubt about the direct unlimited favours and generosities of Imam (a.t.f.s.) whether apparent or concealed to the common man in .general and his Shiites in particular

To conclude, in conformation of the fact that Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) constantly exhibits his favours to his Shiites and sometimes even manifests himself, we set forth here a :sentence from Imam's ' tauqee ' to Shaikh Mufid

We have news about you. We are aware of your hardships and we are not neglectful " in observing your state. We aren't forgetful of you, otherwise you would live a difficult (life and the enemies would destroy you ."(١

Observance, remembrance and collection of news constantly occur together with .apparent favours and grace

t:۶۶

Ehtejaj ۲:۴۹۷ -۱

In one quick and short research one can see that the most pious and trustworthy figures in history like Sayyed Bah'rul Ulum, Allamah Hilli, Muqaddas Ardebeli and many others have succeeded in meeting Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) thus leaving no place for .any doubt

In this connection, you may refer to Mehre-Mahboob, pages ۳۱-۴۹ and about -:meetings and contacts with Imam (a.t.f.s.), refer to the following books

- .Najme-Saqeb, chapter seven

- (Sobhe-Omeed: ۱۰۱-۱۱۵ (section concerning manifestations

- Jannat'ul-Mah'va

- Rauzaneh-Be-Khorshid

- (Translation of Esbat'ul-Huda ۷:۲۷۰ onwards (chapter ۳۳

- Muntahi'ul-Aamaal ۲:۸۰۴-۸۰۵

t:۶۷

:QUESTION ۱۴

At which places the probability is more for seeing Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.)? Is he ?present in public places too or he can be seen at special places only

:REPLY

Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) visits few special places and does not visit certain other places. He does not step in places of diversion and amusement although he has control and oversees them and Allah makes him aware about them. One cannot find him in unlawful, immoral and corrupt places. He is particular about recommendable acts. He visits Imam Husain's (a.s.) grave especially on every Thursday night. He attends the Umra in month of Rajab and visits the grave of holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) and other Imams (a.s.). His special grace and kindness extends over all the religious gatherings of the Shiites. The more beneficial and constructive these gatherings and the more nearer they are to Allah's satisfaction, the greater is Hazrat's care and .attention for such gatherings

t:۶۹

Reason and experience dictate that he cares and extends his favour for gatherings that remember Imam Husain's (a.s.) virtues and misfortunes. The criterion in gatherings is not the number of attendants. The good heart of the speaker, the sincerity of the listeners, the pure intention of the house-owner, the prayers recited for Hazrat in that gathering and the attendants' good manners are fully effective in attracting Imam's attention. In fact, on numerous occasions, Hazrat has been seen in such gatherings. I emphasise once again that chances of seeing Hazrat are more in gatherings commemorating Imam Husain (a.s.). He has also been seen many times in Mecca, in the holy prophet's (s.a.w.a.) shrine, in holy places and the shrine of Amir-ul-.(.Mu'minin (a.s

:We narrate here one memoir

About twenty-five years ago, a group amongst our sincere friends living in Shiraz collectively left one Thursday night for the outskirts of the city for a holiday rest. In the mountainous region, amidst the several trees and besides a spring, they recited Dua-e-Kumail on that Thursday night and were all in good mood. They called upon Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) numerous times. Usually, a state of forgetfulness overtakes those who are fortunate in meeting Hazrat. If not, then they would scream out drawing the attention of others thus making open the event whereas only a few are supposed to experience this grace. After that incident, one of them (who is still alive) narrates as :such

Since we rested in an open and mountainous region, we planned that one amongst us should keep guard every two hours over others who would sleep so as to

protect the group from wild beasts. It was now my turn for keeping guard and it was past midnight. I walked on the border line where my friends lay asleep. I noticed a lantern lit near a spring that was at short distance from us and I saw someone drinking water. I went forward. I saw a splendid and dignified figure besides the spring. I greeting him and said: 'What are you doing here during this part of the night? He replied, 'I visit my friends wherever they gather. Those who reached here last .night are our friends and we care for them. I have come here for their sake

During that state, this youth had turned completely heedless and inattentive. The next morning, the group recited Dua-e-Nudba and at intervals, would call upon Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). During the last hours when the group started packing their things for departure, this youth suddenly jumped up and his state transformed completely. His friends inquired about his change of attitude and he said, 'Sit down, I have something .to narrate.' Thereafter, he narrated the event of last night

Those who call him and implore for his help in young age receive greater attention from him. To sum up, the probable place Hazrat visits is the gatherings in which the .Shiites engage themselves in worship and remembrance of Allah

I recommend the youths to have good manners and perform ablution while attending such gatherings. One should have purity of heart and should attend for Allah's sake. One must be attentive. That kind Imam (a.t.f.s.) shows greater favour towards the youth as their sins are lesser and their burden much lighter and if any special

.grace is to be showered it would be showered upon the youths. Inshallah

-:In this regard, you may refer to the following books

.Najme-Saqeb, chapter seven -

Translation of Mekyal'ul-Makarem : ۲ page ۲۳۸ (ninth duty), page ۲۴۱ (tenth duty), - (page ۲۴۵ (thirteenth duty) and page ۳۰۵ (twenty-ninth duty

Paivande-Ma'navi, duty No ۵۴ -

.[Rea'yatul Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) [Arabic -

t:۷۲

:QUESTION ۱۵

It is said that Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) has said, "We aren't forgetful of our Shiites and we remember them." Does he mean the entire Shiites and even the sinful amongst them or he refers only the pious among them? If it is the latter case, then what would ?be the state of the sinful

:REPLY

In the lexicon of Ahl'ul-bayt traditions, the Shiites are a group of special people. However, no term, concept and spiritual meaning is assigned to any single special group but instead encompasses various grades and levels. Although the truth of any term and its concept are more easily grasped if applied to outstanding figures nevertheless the same concept is also true at lower levels. In other words, all phrases are analogical and in definition, it's not that the first level category only is taking into .account

In our divine lexicon, terms such as 'Aalem', 'Mu'min', 'Faqih', 'Saleh' and 'Muttaqi' are used

t:۷۳

numerously. But these terms are not used for a few special class or exclusive people only even though special categories constantly come to one's mind. For example, the term ' Faqih ' denotes "someone well-versed in religion". It does not merely refer to someone who is top-most in 'Fiqh ' (for instance Shaikh Tusi) but rather also applies to .lower categories

Thus, Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) statement (in ' tauqee ' of Shaikh Saduq) that "We aren't neglectful in remembering you and aren't forgetful of your affairs" does not merely apply to the top-most Shiites only. Rather it applies to lower categories too with the condition that they don't remain aloof from Shiite ethics so much so that they .'exit from the real meaning of 'Shia

If only the lofty and eminent Shiites are considered in the eyes of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) then it would apply only to a few limited people of every era and the common people would no longer strive to traverse from inferior to superior level and our Imam's grace and kindness would not embrace and encompass all. But, from Imam's great ocean of love, we see everyone drawing the water of life and enjoying spiritual .bliss each one to the capacity of their cup

This is the rule of Divine Mercy and affection and the Imams (a.s.) are the perfect manifestation of Divine Mercy and affection. They don't withhold a bit from expressing their kindness and assisting the helpless and weak and numerous pages in .history have recorded their noble temperament

:Shaikh Saduq narrates in "Savaab al-A'maal": Mo'alla-ibn-Honais says

In one rainy night, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) left his house and intended to visit the umbrella-" stand of Bani-Sa'eda (a place ascribed to Bani-Sa'eda and the poor would sleep at night in that place). I followed Imam (a.s.). On the way, something fell from Hazrat's '.hand. He said, 'In the name of Allah. O Allah! Bring back whatever has fallen

In the darkness of night I went near and greeted him. He said, O Mo'alla, is it you? I replied, 'Yes, may my life be sacrificed for you.' He said, 'Search with your hands and whatever you find give it to me.' As I lay my hand on the ground, I realized that a few pieces of bread had fallen down. I picked them up and handed over to him. Meanwhile, I realized that a bag full of bread accompanied him as well. I said, 'May I be sacrificed for you. Will you allow me to carry this bag? He said, 'No I must carry it '.myself but you can accompany me

We reached the umbrella-stand of Bani-Sa'eda. I saw people sleeping at this place. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) went forward. He quietly kept beneath the baggage of everyone one piece and two pieces of bread. Thereafter, we returned. On the way, I asked, 'Were they all the followers of true religion? He replied, 'If they were followers of the true religion, I would have made them my partners in everything even salt and (pepper."(١

Thus, people who were not followers of truth were meted out with such grace and (kindness. Besides, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) reckons the followers of truth (i.e., the Shiites

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.Translation of Savaab al-A'maal: ٣٢٠, tradition ٢ -١

to be his partners even in salt and pepper. Truly, his great son Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) too is kind and graceful to the Shiites and he allows the same magnanimity and .generosity to prevail

:As such, we can conclude and say in brief

Everyone, whether pious or wicked can expose themselves to Hazrat's grace and kindness and on this basis, it is advisable for the pious to strive more in his piety and for the wicked to refrain from evils and instead turn to piety with the hope that .Imam's boundless grace encompasses them all

-:About Imam's grace, refer to the following books

(Bihar-ul-Anwar ۲۷:۷۳-۲۳۹ (chapters ۴ to ۱۰ -

.Translation of Mekyal'ul-Makarem ۱:۱۰۶, ۲۶۷ ۳۲۱ -

Mehre-Mahboob -

Ma'refate Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.): ۲۹۹ -

Sobhe-Omid: ۱۰۱ -

t:۷۶

:QUESTION ۱۶

Where is Imam (a.t.f.s.) placed in the creation of this world and what is meant by 'Vilayate-Takvin' (authority over creation)? What does it imply when we say, 'Imam-?e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) is the medium for receiving bounties and blessings

:REPLY

Vilayate-Takvin' (authority over creation) implies that Imam and Allah's hujjat plays a ' fundamental role in creation. Just like the sun which plays a sensitive role in giving material bounties to living creatures, Imam (a.t.f.s.) receives the blessings of existence with all its perfections from the divine world and bestows it to all other .creations

Considering that the blessing of existence and its perfections descends from top to bottom, the Almighty Allah bestows this bounty by means of superior and noblest creature down to the other creatures. In the traditions of immaculate Imams (a.s.), :we read

t:۷۷

" لو بقيت الآرض بغير إمام لساخت"

"If the earth is devoid of an Imam, it would swallow its inhabitants."(1)

Also,

"الحجه قبل الخلق و مع الخلق و بعد الخلق"

"The existence of ' hujjat ' (Imam) is a must before the creation, with creation as well as after creation."(2)

As per substantial and sound traditions concerning the manner of creation, the Almighty Allah, in the preceding world created the light of holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) from His own magnificence light. Then, from the holy prophet's light, He created the light of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen and Fatemah (a.s.). Thereafter, from the light of these two figures, He created the light of Imam Hasan and Imam Husain (a.s.) and later the other Imams (a.s.). The illuminating light of immaculate ones (a.s.), the first of its stages in creation, started glorifying and praising the Almighty Allah. Then, in the world of spirits, their pure souls were created and after formation of the world of body, the soul got attached to body and their elemental bodies were formed. Thereafter, from their light, the Almighty Allah manifested the rest of creation.(3)

It's interesting to point out that there exist a general resemblance between their bodies and the souls of

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1- Kafi 1:179, tradition 10

2- Ibid 1:177, tradition 4

3- Bihar-ul-Anwar 15:9, tradition 9

Shiites. Their bodies are from the world of "Elliyeen" and their souls higher than "Elliyeen" . On the other hand, the souls of Shiites are from the world of "Elliyeen" and their bodies from a lower world.(١) The basis of such discussion can be found in :numerous traditions in below-mentioned books

Usul-e-Kafi (Vol ١, pages ٣٨٩-٣٩٠-

(Basaer-al-Darejat (page ۴٠-

(Bihar-ul-Anwar (٢۵: page ١-٣۶; ٢۶: page ١-١٧ and ٢٣: page ٣٠۴-٣٢۵-

Thus, medium of blessing via Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) implies receiving the 'light of existence' from higher levels and giving it to the lower levels i.e., transfer of blessing of existence to lower creatures. Such type of creation is something in accordance with Divine Wisdom and Allah has made it a custom in all His creations. In philosophical terms, this type of creation (which is certain and conclusive as per traditions) is named as the principle of 'Emkan-e-Al-ashraf'o-Fal-Ashraf'. Those interested for a detailed account can refer to books on traditions in the chapter related to creation of light of .(.holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Imams (a.s

Some of the benefits of Imam's existence during major concealment are like the benefits of the sun concealed behind the cloud. As per narration in Bihar-ul-Anwar :narrated from Muhammad-ibn-Ya'qub Kulaini, Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) himself says

t:٧٩

Kafi: ٣٨٩, tradition ١-۴ -١

"The manner one benefits from my existence (my place in creation and society) during the concealment era is like the manner one benefits from the sun concealed behind the cloud. Verily, I am a respite and comfort for the inhabitants on earth just as the stars are for the inhabitants in heaven….."(۱)

Jabir-ibn-Abdullah Ansari inquired from the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.): 'Will the Shiites benefit during concealment of the ' Qaem '? The holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) replied:

"Yes, I swear by the One who appointed me as prophet that they shall derive benefit from him and will find brightness from the light of his ' Vilayat' just as they benefit from the sun that is hidden behind the clouds."(۲)

Under this tradition, Allama Majlisi has described eight aspects of similarity between benefits derived from Imams during concealment and sun hidden behind clouds. We have explained them in detail in the book 'Mehre-Mahboob' (page ۴۲) and all of these are discussed from the viewpoint of creation and existence.

But from the viewpoint of divine legislation and guidance and bid for good and forbid of evil, Imam is the protector of religion, guide for mankind, very sympathetic, a compassionate father for them, a radiant sun emitting life and a pleasant limpid ocean.(۳)

t:۸۰

۱- Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۲:۹۲, tradition ۷

۲- Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۲:۹۳, tradition ۸

۳- Kafi ۱:۲۰۰, tradition ۱, Imam Reza (a.s.)

Imam is the model of servitude before Allah and the caravan leader of worshippers .and devout people taking mankind towards the desired divine goal

This rank of guidance which is the rank of showing the way is related to divine legislation (hedayat'e-tashri'ee). Rather, it makes one reach the desired perfection which is named as 'esoteric guidance in creation' (hedayat'e-takvin) [the change in Zazan's behaviour by just one look of Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.) or change in Zuhair's attitude after his contact with Imam Husain (a.s.) on the way to Karbala etc are few examples. These are special circumstances where after hedayat'e-takvini , the .[concerned person perceives the truth and reality

:In invocations we say

" آللهم إنی آسآلک بحق محمد و علی و فاطمه و الحسن و الحسین............

The reason we swear by their names before Allah is because they are the medium of elevation of our deeds and prayers to the Divine threshold. For this reason, Imam Reza (a.s.), while describing the position and rank of Imamate says in a tradition come :down in Kafi as follows

"بالإمام تمام الصلاه و الزکاه و الحج و.........."

Completion of prayers, zakat, haj and.........is by means of Imam" (belief in" (Imamate)(١)

About benefits and status of the immaculate Imams and particularly Imam-e-Zaman -:(a.t.f.s.) in creation, you may refer to the below-mentioned books

Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۲: ۹۰ onwards and ۱۵: ۱-۱۰۴ -

t:۸۱

Kafi ۱:۲۰۰ -۱

- Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) from birth till reappearance: ۲۸۴ till ۲۹۵

- Esbath-ul-Huda ۷:۲۷۰ onwards.

- Imamate-wa-Mahdaviyat ۱: Vilayate-Takvini

- Ma'refate-Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) section one.

- Khurshid-e-Maghreb: ۱۷۸

- Translation of Mekyal'ul-Makarem ۱:۲۷۱ and ۳۰۹

t:۸۲

:QUESTION ۱۷

How would be the physical appearance of Imam (a.t.f.s.) at the time of his ?reappearance? Considering his long age, would he look old or young

:REPLY

Some of the traditions concerning Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) describe that time would not turn him old and he would continue to look young. In one of the traditions it has come -:down as follows

" عن آبی الصلت الهروی قال: قلت للرضا (ع): ما علامات القائم منکم إذا خرج؟ قال:

علامته آن یکون شیخ السن شاب المنظر حتی آن الناظر لیحسبه ابن آربعین سنه آو دونها و إن من علاماته آن لایهرم بمرور الآیام و اللیالی حتی یآتیه آجله"

Aba Salte Haravi says: I asked Imam Reza (a.s.): 'What is the sign of your Qaem (so" that one can recognize

t:۸۳

him)? Hazrat Reza (a.s.) replied: Amongst the signs is that he would be old from the viewpoint of age but would look young in appearance and anyone looking at him would imagine him to be forty or even less. Amongst his other sign is that time would (never turn him old until death meets him."(١)

:In another tradition, Imam Hasan-ibn-Ali (a.s.) says

When Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) will rise, the people would deny him because he would approach" them with the face of a youth while they would imagine him to possess an aged (face."(٢)

In yet another tradition come down in the book 'Ghaibat-e-Tusi', Imam (a.t.f.s.) resembles prophet Yunus (a.s.) by possessing a youthful face.(٣) About this matter, .you may refer to the book "Ruzgaar-e-Reha'ee" ١: ١٢٧-١٢٩

It's worthy to mention that all the fortunate ones who have met Hazrat during minor or major concealment have seen him with a youthful face and appearing as a man of .forty. We pray to Allah to make us fortunate too, Inshallah

:Specimens of those having met Hazrat can be found in the following books

Najme-Saqeb, section ٧ -

Rauzaneh-Be-Khurshid -

t:٨۴

.Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ٢٨۴, tradition ٢ from Kamaluddin -١

Yanabi'ul-Mawaddah: research of Sayyed Ali Jamal Ashraf al-Husaini ٣:٣٩٣ (chapter -٢ (٩۴, tradition ٣٩

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ٢٨۵, tradition ۶ -٣

- Muntakhab-ul-Athar (section ۵, chapter ۱۲)

- Jannat'ul-Ma'va.

t:۸۵

:QUESTION ۱۸

If Imam's (a.t.f.s.) reappearance is connected to the earth getting filled with injustice ?and oppression, then is it useful to pursue the goodness, beneficence and piety

:REPLY

Firstly, the earth getting filled with oppression is not the only decisive and unchangeable course for ' zuhoor ' (reappearance). Rather, reappearance has another course too which lies in the people's readiness in accepting the just and (universal government of Imam (a.t.f.s.).(۱

.Secondly, the two realities of 'oppression' and 'filled' are relative issues

Thirdly, the mind, the innate nature as well as the civilized call of all prophets and :Imams have always been this

Even if the entire world is engulfed in corruption and oppression, one should never' '.withhold from reforming the individual and society

Experience too reveals the fruits of these great personalities' endeavours at such sensitive times by

t:۸۷

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۴۹۶, tradition ۸ -۱

.delivering to the corrupt and vicious societies numerous pure and lofty individuals

:Fourthly, the reformers and guides of humanity recommend

The pious people must strive and endeavour to influence the society and not allow ⁕ .the environment and society to affect them

.Enjoining good and forbidding evil should be given top priority and never forsaken ⁕

One shouldn’t lose hope of Divine mercy and support for such despair is itself a ⁕ (major sin.(١

In describing the duties of 'those awaiting', it has come down in a tradition as ⁕ :follows

About this verse, 'O you who believe! Be patient and excel in patience and remain steadfast'(٢) , Imam Baqir (a.s.) says: It means, you should show forbearance in performing the obligatory acts; must adopt patience in the face of your enemies and (should establish connection with your awaited Imam.' (٣

:Also, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said

The one who desires to be among the companions of our 'Qaem' must await him and" (must adopt piety and good manners….."(۴

To sum up, Imam Mahdi's (a.t.f.s.) ' zuhoor ' and rule possess two background or position. The first position

t:٨٨

"Yusuf (١٢):٨٧: "And despair not of Allah's mercy -١

Ale-Imran (٣):٢٠٠ -٢

Al-Muhajjah: ۵٢ -٣

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۴٩٧, tradition ٩ -۴

that pertains to good people is reform and piety and the selection rests with them. The other position is oppression resulting from lack of effort and endeavour on the part of common people and is the normal trend in the society. Here, there is no choice and the environmental conditions are forced on them. As per reason and divine commandments, people living during concealment are responsible for selecting and .setting firm the first course, first for themselves and then for others

:About this matter, you may refer to

Muntakhab-ul-Athar (Arabic): ۴۹۳-۵۰۰ -

Translation of Mekyal'ul-Makarem ۲: ۱۶۵-۶۱۳ -

Ma'refat-e-Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.): ۲۱۹-۳۱۲ -

Mehre-Mahboob: ۸۸-۱۱۴ and ۲۵۸-۲۶۸ -

t:۸۹

:QUESTION ١٩

Despite the presence of numerous pious and religious figures who are involved in good deeds and affairs in the entire world, why doesn’t Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) manifest ?himself

:REPLY

First of all, the existence of good and pious people is not the absolute reason for ' zuhoor ' though it paves the way for it. The very basis of ' zuhoor ' depends on Allah's Will and Wisdom. Allah's Will is the absolute and subjective cause of 'zuhoor ' that fixes measures and ratifies it. The people's mental and spiritual preparedness is the groundwork for that ' zuhoor '. Whenever they are prepared and pray and Allah also Wills so, Hazrat will manifest himself. We cannot say, "Why doesn’t he come despite the presence of pious people? Rather it's our duty to pray and supplicate. The pious .ones must pray for hastening his reappearance

On the other hand, the saying that people are pious and virtuous holds doubt! Do we really have numerous numbers of pious and upright persons in our society? The presence of such people at our times is even less than (as

t:٩١

per traditions) red sulphur. Religion too is scarcely found with people (like red sulphur) and its protection is like holding fire in hand. If the pious ones and pious deeds are deeply analysed and are measured on the basis of Quran, traditions and ethics of Ahl'ul-bayt (a.s.)(١) and the thoughts, beliefs and deeds are very minutely scrutinized at individual and social levels, we will then realize how rare are pious people. Here, we shall narrate an incident said by the father of one Marjae:

One pious and peace-loving man of a city often pleaded before Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) saying, 'O master! Why don't you come despite the presence of so many virtuous men? He cried and pleaded over this matter many times until Imam (a.t.f.s.) appeared before him. Imam (a.t.f.s.) said, 'In order to test how many are really pious, you may gather on Thursday night, forty most virtuous men in the house of the best pious one of the city. You may also call so and so butcher (who was amongst the best and pious people). Procure three goats and take that butcher and the goats on top of terrace of that house.

This pious man selects forty of the best and pious people and gathers them in the courtyard of that house. All sit down and pray and supplicate. (Meanwhile, Hazrat had

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١- The essential condition of goodness of a good person is that he must be free and liberated from the 'self'. The quality of jealousy is unacceptable because one gives priority to himself rather than others. The worship of an arrogant too is unacceptable because he portrays his 'self' along with the Absolute Sovereignty. In the same manner, a miser, a stone-hearted, a hot-tempered, a deceitful and eventually a selfish person (who only sees his own good deeds) do not hold any weight in the precise Divine scale. How many good deeds can be found that are free from all these taints and are performed only and only for Allah's sake?!!

asked that pious man not to disclose anything about the butcher and three goats). All of a sudden, they saw a light appearing above them from the terrace. They become certain that he is Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). Imam (a.t.f.s.) calls one of the virtuous men .(who was indeed very virtuous) on top of the terrace

He goes on top. After few moments, people in the courtyard see blood flowing down from the terrace! They become certain that Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) has beheaded that pious man and hence this flowing blood. A group flee away. Minutes later, Imam .(a.t.f.s.) calls up another pious man

He obeys and goes up. Moments later, they once again see blood flowing down the drain pipe and they gain surety that the second pious man too has been beheaded by Hazrat. All run away and only three men stay behind. Hazrat calls the third pious man. At this moment, except for this called person, the rest too run away. He too (who was .very pious) goes up. Later, blood flows down the drain pipe

Thereafter, Imam (a.t.f.s.) says to that restless man who would often plead for his coming: "People are such. Just because they imagined (and weren't even certain) that they were being beheaded, they fled away whereas the blood flowing down belonged "!to the goats that were slaughtered by the butcher

People must be tested and must pass their test. Apart from this incident there are numerous other incidences too in history which shows that people are not yet prepared for Imam's ' zuhoor ' (manifestation). By tongue, they plead for ' zuhoor ' but by heart, they possess a different colour. The truth is known only when they are .tested

t:۹۳

" آحسب الناس آن یترکوا آن یقولوا: آمنا و هم لا یفبنون؟! و لقد فتنا الذین من قبلهم......"

DO MEN THINK THAT THEY WILL BE LEFT ALONE ON SAYING, WE BELIEVE, AND" (NOT BE TRIED? AND CERTAINLY WE TRIED THOSE BEFORE THEM…."(١)

One of Allah's unchangeable laws is test and examination. When there is test, most people fail and are cast aside. Those who pass in the first stage are very insignificant. That which is necessary is to turn towards the real goodness (not by tongue and deceit) and then pray and plead in that very state. Our heart and reflection should be directed towards Imam's ' zuhoor ' until perhaps the Beneficent Allah takes pity on the prayers of the afflicted ones and rescues the people form perplexity and state of wandering. Verily, our duty is to pray and plead before Allah and adopt goodness and .reform

:About this topic, you may refer to the following books

- Mekyal'ul-Makarem ٢:٢٥٥-٢۶٢

- Ruzgaar-e-Reha'ee, ١:٣۴٩

- Paivande-Ma'navi

- Ma'refat-e-Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.): ٢٨٨

- Mehre-Mahboob: ٢٥٨-٢۶١

t:٩۴

ANKABUT (٢٩) : ٢ ٣ -١

:QUESTION ۲۰

Today, most people say that majority of the signs of reappearance of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) have already occurred." Is this true? Basically, to what extent are the ?signs of reappearance influential in Imam's advent

:REPLY

-:The precise reply calls for preliminary traditions concerning various topics as follows

:' FIRST: Traditions that talk about signs and groundwork for Imam's ' zuhoor

:Once, the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) addressed the attendants as follows

How would it be when your women turn lewd and your youth adulterers and you will" "?forsake enjoining the good and forbidding the evil

:The attendants said

!?O messenger of Allah! Will such an incident ever occur

t:۹۵

:He replied

Yes, even worse than this would occur! How you would be when good shall be" (presented as evil and evil as good....?" (١

:(.Also, Asbagh-ibn-Nubateh narrates from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen (a.s

At the end of time and approach of the hour (resurrection or reappearance), [which is" the worst of all times], women would come out devoid of clothes and decorated with various ornaments. People would be seen exiting from religion, entering into troubles, inclining towards lust, hastening towards pleasures, making lawful the unlawful and (they would be the everlasting hell-dwellers."(٢

-:Besides, the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) said

A time would come when filling the stomach would become people's aspiration and" materialistic life their dignity. Women would become the direction to which people would turn to and money and wealth would become their religion. They are the worst (of human-beings who possess no goodness before Allah."(٣

SECOND: Traditions that strictly prohibit fixing the time of 'zuhoor' and likens it to the .resurrection day

:Kumait says

t:۹۶

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۴۲۶, tradition ۳ -۱
Ibid, tradition ۴ -۲
Ibid: ۴۳۸, tradition ۲۱ -۳

I approached Imam Baqir (a.s.) and asked: When will the Qaem Aale-Muhammad rise? He replied: "The same question was asked before Allah's apostle who said: His rising is similar to the time of setting up of resurrection which will not occur but all of a sudden."(1)

Similarly, Fuzail says:

I asked Imam Baqir (a.s.): Is the hour of 'zuhoor ' known? He replied: "Those who fix the time are liars; those who fix the time are liars; those who fix the time are liars."(2)

Also, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said:

"Those who fix the time are liars. We have neither fixed any time in the past nor shall do so in the future."(3)

THIRD: Traditions that lay stress on invocations for hastening 'z uhoor ' and calling upon Allah for help. If invocations weren't effective, the holy Imams (a.s.) wouldn't have emphasised to such extent. Invocation is effective for any affair that is capable of delay or acceleration. In 'Tauqeeh' of Shaikh Ahmad-ibn-Ishaq, Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) says:

"Close the door of useless queries and refrain from putting yourselves at pain. Suffice yourselves to the extent necessary. Furthermore, pray excessively for accelerating the ' faraj' (deliverance) because your deliverance lies in this (i.e. excessive prayers)."(4)

t:٩٧

١- Ibid: ١٢۴, tradition ٣۴

٢- Ibid: ۴۶٣, tradition ١

٣- Ibid, tradition ٢

۴- Ehtejaj: Tabarsi ٢:۴٧١

:Also, Imam Kazem (a.s.) prays as follows

O Allah, I swear by Your concealed Name......that You send salutations on" Muhammad and Aale-Muhammad and make haste in 'f araj 'of the avenger and make (his specified day reach fulfilment...."(١

FOURTH: Traditions stress that the work of ' zuhoor ' would be rectified in one night .and Allah would permit him to rise

:Zaris Kenani says

I heard Imam Sadiq (a.s.) saying: "In Saheb'ul-Amr there exists a similarity with Yusuf (and that is Allah would rectify his rise in one night."(٢

FIFTH: Traditions that talk about ' bad'a ' (change of previous plan and beginning of :something new). This change of destiny is explained by Imam Baqir (a.s.) as such

Allah has not been worshipped to such degree as (belief in) ' bad'a ' or Allah has not" (been honoured to such extent as ' bad'a '."(٣

Thus, the traditions come down from the immaculate ones (a.s.) have declared the .matter of ' zuhoor ' and rise of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s) as a changeable affair

t:٩٨

Muntakhab-ul-Athar : ٥٠٨, tradition ۶ -١

Ibid: ٣٠٠, tradition ٢ -٢

.Usul-Kafi ١: ١۴۶, tradition ١ -٣

:From the above five groups of traditions, we can conclude as follows

It is likely that the entire signs of ' zuhoor ' could be subject to ' bad'a ' (change) such that Allah would give permission for Hazrat's rise without the occurrence of those signs. We should realize that the affair of ' zuhoo r' lies in Allah's hands and does not depend on the decisive and definite occurrence of signs. As per Divine wisdom, this affair would be corrected in one night. Verily, our duty at this time is to create a sound creed (belief) and ethics at individual and social levels and before that to pray .' excessively for ' faraj

آللهم عجل فرجه و سهل مخرجه واسلک بی محجته

:About ' bad'a ', refer to

Usul-e-Kafi ۱:۱۴۶, tradition ۱-۱۶ -

Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۲:۱۰۱-۱۲۱, tradition ۱-۵۰ -

: About signs of ' zuhoor ', refer to

Ruzgaar-e-Raha'ee, ۲: section ۱۶-۱۹ -

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۴۲۴-۴۳۸ -

(Nava'eb al-Dahoor (Arabic -

Neshanehaye-Zuhoor -

-

: About 'dua' (invocation), refer to

Muntakhab-ul-Athar : ۶۳۵-۶۴۵ -

(Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) Az-Wiladay-Ta-Zuhoor: ۴۰۹-۴۷۲ (chapter ۱۶ -

.Paivande-Ma'navi -

'Imamate-Wa-Mahdaviyat ۲: section related to 'Marefate-Hujjat -

Ma'refate-Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.): ۲۸۴ -

: About the fact that nobody is permitted to fix the time of ' zuhoo r', refer to

Ghaibate-Shaikh Tusi : ۲۶۲ -

Usul-e-Kafi ۱: ۳۶۸ -

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۴۶۳, tradition ۱-۳ -

t:۱۰۰

:QUESTION ٢١

Some traditions talk about new religious laws and commandments during Imam-e-Zaman's rule. Does it mean he would bring a religion different from that of the holy ?(.prophet (s.a.w.a

:REPLY

Many of the Islamic teachings and religious precepts have been turned upside down by wrong interpretations and explanations. The factor behind these changes and distortions are the malicious motives and mean desires of most people and governments which in the course of history have paved the way for establishing their authority and opening the path of playing with religious creed and realities. The ' ghaibat ' (concealment) of the ' Hujjah ' who is the genuine interpreter of Quran has turned into an appropriate opportunity for the mischief-maker and his wrongdoings. Distortion of most of these realities began from the holy prophet's (s.a.w.a.) era and would continue till the time of ' zuhoor '. One of the most vital steps Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) would take would be his campaign against distortions and wrong .interpretations that have kept the human mind engaged for centuries

t:١٠١

Thus, his religion would be no different from the religion preached by the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.). Rather, it would be a return to the very pure and true original Islam and the .same heavenly and everlasting book

As such, in numerous instances, it would differ with what people used to practice in the length of history. During ' ghaibat ' (concealment), its likely people haven't acted upon the true Islam and some have even interpreted wrongly Islam and Quran so much so that at the time of ' zuhoor ', people will imagine that Hazrat has brought a .new creed

:In many traditions it has come down that Hazrat would give a new start to Islam

" يستآيف الإسلام جديدا....."(١)

:Similarly, it has come down in the holy Quran

And to Him shall submit whoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or" (unwillingly." (٢

This verse reveals that Islam and monotheism would turn widespread; the holy prophet's (s.a.w.a.) Islam and the Quranic laws would be implemented. Most of the sciences too would follow the realities and Hazrat would explain and interpret truly .the verses of Quran and divine rules

While talking about Mahdi's ' zuhoor ', Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.) says about Hazrat's :reforms as follows

t:١٠٢

١- Bihar-ul-Anwar ٥٢:٣٥٣ ٣٥۴

٢- Aale-Imran: (٣) : ٨٣

" يعطف الهوى على الهدى إذا عظفوا الهدى على الهوى و يعطف الرآى على القرآن إذا عطفوا القرآن على الرآى"

After replacement of Allah's worship with capricious desires, He shall restore worship" of capricious desires with worship of Allah. After restitution of Quran with personal opinion and understanding, he shall restore Quran in place of personal judgements (and opinions."(١)

:Imam Sadiq (a.s.) too says

"......إن قائمنا إذا قام آتى الناس و كلهم يتآول عليه كتاب الله و يحتج عليه به....."

when our Qaem shall rise , everyone would set forth before him reason from..." (Allah's book and they would interpret and explain Allah's book (Quran)....(٢)

The wrong interpretations and explanations of Quran is the problem Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) would face during 'zuhoor' . These distortions and personal views would turn upside down the divine book and Sunnah till the time of ' zuhoor ' to such extent that Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.), in continuation of the aforesaid sermon interprets the divine book and sunnah as dead: "......و يحيى ميت الكتاب و السنه"

"...He (Mahdi during ' zuhoo r') shall give life to the dead book and sunnah"

t:١٠٣

Nahjul-Balagha, sermon ١٣٨ -١

Ghaibat-Nu'mani: ٢٩٧ -٢

Therefore, during the time of ' zuhoor ', Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) would cast aside the decorations put on divine religion and precepts and remove all sorts of distortions and interpretations levied against the Quran and religion. He shall establish monotheism and Quranic justice in the human society and he would gather the whole world under one banner, one creed, one heavenly book (Quran) and one doctrine. He would set up .one nation from the human society

:Details of this topic can be found in the following books

- Bihar-ul-Anwar (Arabic): ۱:۲۴۷, tradition ۵۹; Vol ۵۲:۳۶۷, tradition ۱۵۰; Vol ۵۲:۳۵۳, Vol ۸:۱۲

- Muntakhab-ul-Athar (Arabic): ۲۹۲ ۲۹۷

- Ruzgaar-e-Raha'ee, ۲: ۵۹۱

- Khurshide-Maghreb, chapter ۱۴:۳۳۵

- Seemaye Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) Dar Quran: ۹۵, ۱۰۵, ۲۵۴

- .Imamate-wa-Mahdaviyat, Vol ۳ : Towards a noble government

- Asr-e-Zendegi, section ۵, ۱۶ and ۲۰

- Tarikhe-ma-ba'daz-zuhoor (Arabic): ۶۳۷-۶۵۵

t:۱۰۴

:QUESTION ٢٢

Does ' Adl ' (justice) during Imam-e-Zaman's rule and the fact come down in traditions that Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) would fill the earth with justice refers to mere social ?justice or covers individual justice too

:REPLY

Adl ' (justice) implies that everything is set in its own proper place and maintains ' equilibrium. Social justice is movement of society towards the correct goal and injustice is just its contrary. Thus, like injustice, justice is not mere governmental and .social justice but enjoys a wider meaning

Firstly, it represents one of the prominent divine attributes and in this regard Imam :(a.s.) says

(The basis of religion is 'tauhid' (monotheism) and 'Adl' (justice)."(١ "

Secondly, it is amongst man's individual virtues. A just person is someone who does .not commit major sin nor repeats minor sins

t:١٠٥

Tauhid-e-Saduq: ٩۶ -١

Thirdly, at times, it is used as a scale and a true and correct saying is called a just .saying

Consequently, justice means to be moderate and to refrain from sins and implications. Social justice is reckoned to be only one of its most evident applicability. Under the circumstances, in reply to the above-mentioned query, one can say: During the time of Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.), the government training programs would drive human-beings towards individual justice and the social programs would set up a just system and its :evident proof can be found in the famous statement

"يملآ الآرض قسطا و عدلا كما ملئت ظلما و جورا"

:In this regard, you may refer to the following books

- Khurshide-Maghreb: ۲۹-۳۵

- "Imamate Wa Mahdiaviyat, Vol ۳, 'Towards a noble government

- Asre-Zendagi, sections ۱, ۷, ۸, ۱۳ ۱۷

- .Kamaale-Hasti Dar Asre-Zuhoor

- .Ayande'ye-Jahan

t:۱۰۶

:QUESTION ٢٣

Manifestation of religion and the prophet's sunnah as well as severance of the oppressors' arms is the duty of all Muslims. So how do we recite in Dua'e-Nudba : 'O Allah! Through him, manifest your religion and make evident Your prophet's sunnah. ?Also, we recite, 'Where is the one stored-up for severing the arms of the oppressors

:REPLY

All the duties that the Muslims are charged with are undertaken by Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) in its highest form. He fulfils the best of it and personally performs whatever he invites others towards it. In Islam, a deed performed by one for another is not accepted. Rather, every Muslim has an independent and separate duty for himself .(.aside from few exclusive duties borne by the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Imams (a.s

The level and work of anyone depends on his responsibility, ability and duty. Imam-e-Zaman's exclusive responsibility is to implement the Islamic ordinances all over the earth; uproot tyranny and

t:١٠٧

oppression from the earth and hoist the banner of Islam and monotheism in every nook and corner of the earth. All the Muslims bear this responsibility but their global leader in this affair is Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) who would lead them. As such, the common duty of the Muslims doesn’t in any way contradict the global duty of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) as an Imam, leader and commander. The same is true to all the other qualities :we attribute to him in Dua'e-Nudba. For example

"?....Where is the awaited one, for the correction of the bent and crooked"

"?Where is the object of hope for demolishing tyranny and hostility"

"?Where is the one safely stored-up for the revival of precepts and ordinances"

In all these expressions, Imam Hujjat-ibn'l-Hasan (a.t.f.s.) is looked upon as a leader and guide. Such remark exists in all cultures where the work of one executing the command is ascribed to the commander too because he bears the responsibility of .drawing the plan, managing its implementation and harmonizing the forces

Regarding the end of the tyrants' rule by hands of Hujjat-ibn'l-Hasan (a.t.f.s.), you :may refer to the below-mentioned books

'Ruzgaar-e-Raha'ee, Vol ۲, section concerning 'the true government -

.Dar-Fajre-Sahel, sections ۲ ۳ -

Khurshid-e-Maghreb, chapter ۱۴ -

t:۱۰۸

".Imamate-Wa-Mahdaviyat, Vol ۳, 'Towards the noble government -

Kamaale-Hasti Dar Asre-Zuhoor, section ۱۴ -

t:۱۰۹

:QUESTION ۲۴

Will Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) judge the Ahl'e-kitab (people of the book) by their own ?books

:REPLY

Imam (a.t.f.s.) would invite them to their own books and would judge on the basis of their books till the time they bring faith in Hazrat and turn Muslims. Verily, his reasoning would be based on divine books but the un-distorted ones. It has come down in traditions that he would draw out the Torah , Injeel and other past divine (books from the cave of Entakia and would argue by them.(۱

However, the rule would be an Islamic rule. The government would be taken care by Islamic rules and regulations. Everything would be with Islam and Imam (a.t.f.s.) would debate with the people in the most desired manner. In the un-distorted books, glad tidings about Imam's reappearance has come down in more clear terms though such glad tidings can be found in the distorted

t:۱۱۱

Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۲:۳۵۱ -۱

.books as well. We have referred to them in reply to another query

The 'f iqh ' (jurisprudence) during Imam-e-Zaman's era would be the pure ' fiqh ' of Islam and Ahl'ul-bayt. The administration would be based on justice. In fact, justice would prevail in all the circles of Mahdi's government. All affairs would be run on the basis of holy Quran. Verily, social justice would prevail in every nook and corner of the .society and widespread all over the earth

-:About details of Hazrat's rule, refer to the following books

- (Ruzgaar-e-Raha'ee: ۲:۵۹۱-۶۷۶ (section ۱۴

- Seemaye Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) Dar Quran: ۱۵۰, ۱۷۱, ۱۹۱, ۲۳۱, ۲۴۲, ۲۵۴, ۲۷۵, ۲۸۳, ۴۲۵ ۴۲۳

- Dar Fajre-Sahel : section ۲

- Asre-Zendagi

- .Kamaale-Hasti Dar Asre-Zuhoor

t:۱۱۲

:QUESTION ۲۵

After 'z uhoor ', will Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) make use of modern technology or not? Also, will technology continue its advancement at that time or will its progress come to ?a halt

:REPLY

There is no verse or tradition that says Imam (a.t.f.s.) would cast aside new and advanced technology or that whenever he manifests himself the technology at man's disposal would fail to function. Besides, it wasn't the practice of holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Imams (a.s.) to avoid using technology or craft prevailing at their respective .times. So Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) too would follow the practice of his forefathers

On the basis of traditions that talk about the power and strength of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) and his companions, we can say: Other than the unseen powers, they would also benefit from prevailing means but we cannot pass any definite judgement in this :regard. For instance, we read in one tradition

t:۱۱۳

He (in whatsoever part of the world he may be residing) would establish contact with " each of the agents and members of his government (who are ۳۱۳ in number). He (would see them and converse with them ."(۱

From this tradition, we draw this probability that Hazrat's companions would employ :new and advanced crafts. Another tradition says

:When Imam (a.t.f.s.) rises, he would lean upon the holy Ka'ba and then say"

آلا يا آهل العلم ! بقيه الله خير لكم إن كنتم مؤمنين و آنا بقيه الله

(And Hazrat's voice would be heard by all the people of the world ."(۲ "

From this tradition too we can draw this conclusion that he would probably employ collective communication means and would make his voice reach the whole world. However, in all of Imam's affairs, there also exists the probability of usage of unseen .powers

About the query whether progress and advancement would continue during Imam's time or not traditions say that during his time, knowledge and know-how would advance by leaps and bounds. However, whether knowledge would definitely move in the direction of much superior technology or in some other direction is not precisely .clear

t:۱۱۴

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۴۸۳, tradition ۲۳ -۱

.Ibid: ۴۶۷, tradition ۴ -۲

:Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said

Ilm (knowledge) consists of twenty-seven parts. All the prophets and Imams have " brought two parts of Ilm and when our Mahdi comes, he will bring the other twenty-(five parts of it." (١

Please ponder over the contents of this tradition. It's not that Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) knows twenty-five parts of knowledge and the prophets and other Imams were unaware. Rather it says, "The entire knowledge brought by prophets are two parts from the ".twenty-seven parts and Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) shall bring twenty-five parts

The matters revealed by the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.), Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.) till Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.), Hazrat Adam, Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, Isa and all preceding prophets were two parts from the twenty-seven parts. Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) shall bring the other twenty-five parts of knowledge. If we take into account this proportion, it shows whatever Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s) would bring would be something extraordinary in all .fields of knowledge

Besides this noble tradition, we have another tradition narrated from Imam :(.Muhammad Baqir (a.s

"وضع یده علی رووس العباد فجمع بها عقولهم و کملت به آحلامهم"

When our 'Qaem' shall come, he shall place his hand over the head of (Allah's) slaves" (and their intellect shall turn perfect and their ethics completed." (٢

t:١١٥

(Muntahi'ul-Aamal, ٢:٧۶٩ (point ٣۶ regarding Hazrat's qualities -١

.Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۴٨٣, tradition ١ -٢

:Also, Imam (a.s.) says

(When Hazrat shall manifest himself, the earth shall emit out its bounties."(۱'

What are the earth's bounties? They are treasures, precious stones, useful and needed growths all over the earth. Besides, one cannot neglect the divulgence of :spiritual bounties. It's come down in a tradition that

(At the time of 'zuhoor', there would be no land but fruitful and flourishing ." (۲ "

To sum up, various traditions show the existence of extraordinary progress and unparallel spread of knowledge during Imam's time. But it's not clear whether it would .be definitely due to technology and that too with today's concept in mind

Whatever was said in this chapter is based on probability. Regarding sciences, knowledge and advancement during Imam Mahdi's (a.t.f.s.) era, you may refer to :below-mentioned books

Ruzgaar-e-Raha'ee: ۶۲۰, ۶۲۲ ۶۶۴ -

Muntahi'ul-Aamal ۲:۷۶۹ -

.Kamaale-Hasti Dar Asre-Zuhoor: section ۱۱ -

t:۱۱۶

Ibid: ۴۷۲, tradition ۱ ۴ -۱

.Ibid: ۴۷۳, tradition ۱ -۲

:QUESTION ۲۶

How would be the economic condition during Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) rule and on ?what parameters would the economy run during his reign

:REPLY

Traditions do talk about the economic state and people's means of livelihood during Imam's (a.t.f.s.) era. It should be noted that his economic model would differ from the well-known models of today. Islam is always independent in all its rules and precepts and except for a sound natural disposition it does not rely on any human system. Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) who is the complete Islam and Quran will fully put into .practice the very true and real Islam

The verses of Quran and traditions teach us points which we shall set forth here along with some introduction. In the Islamic system and order, there exist three main foundations: Belief, ethics and jurisprudence. These three rings are inseparable from one another. The economic system of Islam is not separate from the

political system; the political system isn't separate from the system of ethics and the system of ethics is not detached from the system of beliefs (creed). This is a very vital issue. It is wrong to consider the economic system of Islam to be one ring un-joined .with other rings. Rather, we should examine the system collectively

Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) rule is founded on the basis of contents of the verse, " They (یعبـدوننی لاـ یشـرکون بی شـیئا) shall serve Me, not associating aught with Me "(۱) and monotheism and theism is its main pillar and foundation. Therefore, the economic system cannot be designed as one independent system either in Islam or during .Imam-e-Zaman's rule. Rather, it's a ring in one set of closely joined rings

:Keeping in view this introduction and the subsequent points, we now say

The holy Imams (a.s.) have set forth various matters related to the economic system during Imam-e-Zaman's rule. For instance, at the time of his reign, no spot on the earth will remain but that it would manifest its bounties and nobody will step on any spot but fully cultivated and flourishing.(۲) Moreover, Hazrat would distribute wealth equally.(۳) Here, equally means equality and justice and distribution takes place on the .basis of need

By justice, we do not mean mathematical evenness. Rather, observance of proportionality in society

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۱- Nur (۲۴) : ۵۵

۲- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۴۷۳, tradition ۳

۳- Ibid: ۱۴۷, tradition ۱۴

is justice and equality. The one living as a bachelor is not the same as the one who supports two in a family. Mathematical evenness is neither rational nor just. Besides, traditions say that the economic state, high-mindedness and people's freedom from want would be to such extent that Hazrat would call the needy and say, "Pick up the money?" The people in turn will act honestly and pick up to the extent of their need. During Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) government, the people would enjoy the divine bounties that were blockaded by (past) governments.

We have still another set of traditions. For instance, a woman would carry a tray of gold on her head and travel from Iraq to Syria and she would not step but only on grass. On her head would be ornaments without anyone disturbing her!(1)

Although this tradition reveals the security that would prevail during Hazrat's era, it also talks about people's freedom from want at that time. It's this freedom from want that would prevent anybody from looking at a lonely woman's ornaments and economic and financial security would be thus established.

Abundant bounties from one side and implementation of social justice on the other side will uproot poverty to such extent that as per other set of traditions, there will remain no needy and indigent person so that people can pay them their ' zakat '.(2)

t:۱۱۹

۱- Ibid:۴۷۳, tradition ۳

۲- Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۱:۱۴۶, tradition ۱۷

:In this connection, you may refer to the following books

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) Az-Wiladat Ta Zuhoor: ۶۲۶-۶۳۰ -

Asre-Zendagi: ۱۰۷-۱۳۱ -

.Dar-Entezare-Imam, chapter concerning universal government -

Raha'ee-Bakhs: ۱۱-۱۴ and ۳۹-۴۷ -

Dar Fajre-Sahel: ۳۷-۴۷ -

t:۱۲۰

:QUESTION ۲۷

Does Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) depend on our ' sadaqa ' (alms and charity) that we pay for his safety and well-being? In the same way, does he require the recommendable prayers or other deeds that we perform and gift to him or perform ?(.on his behalf? Basically, what is the consequence of such actions for Imam (a.t.f.s

:REPLY

Matters like gifting spiritual reward of good deeds (other than obligatory acts) to Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), gifting of recommendable acts or their performance on behalf of Hazrat or other Imams (a.s.) and holy prophet (s.a.w.a.); financial servings like giving alms or serving food to the poor for gaining Hazrat's satisfaction; ' Na zr' (vows and oblations) for Imam Husain (a.s.) and Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) are all from one class and category. Regarding this issue, one must pay attention to few fundamental :points

Firstly, in performing a good deed and presenting its reward to an immaculate Imam, we are only following

t:۱۲۱

the directives come down in traditions. Traditions specify that people would inform the Imam (a.s.) of their time that they perform deeds on behalf of the past Imams (a.s.) and Imam (a.s.) would approve this act. For instance, pay attention to this :tradition

A person approached Imam Kazim (a.s.) and said: When Eid-e-Fitr approaches, I finish one full recitation of Quran (out of about forty recitation I did in the blessed month of Ramazan) for the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.), one full recitation for Hazrat Fatemah (a.s.) and one full recitation for the holy Imams (a.s.). At the end, I finish one full recitation on behalf of you. Does this act bring me any reward? Imam (a.s.) replied: 'The reward you earn is that you would accompany them on the day of resurrection.' I said, Allaho-Akbar! Will I be given such a reward? Imam (a.s.) uttered thrice: " Yes ".(١)

In this connection, you may refer to the invaluable book, " Paivand-e-Ma'navi Ba Sahaate Qodse Mahdavi ", Duty ۴۱ ۴۲. Some other traditions talk about 'Ziarat' and 'Namaz-e-Ziarat' as reward for Imams (a.s.). Refer to Bihar-ul-Anwar ۹۱:۲۱۵; ۱۰۰:۲۸۸; ۱۰۱:۳۵۴ etc.

Secondly, in this material and physical world, no movement or action takes place without any reaction or effect. The smallest physical action like twinkling of eyes leaves its effect. So how can one consider a spiritual action and deed (that takes place in the spiritual world and its effect is incomparable with that of the physical world) to be effect-less. Although the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Imams (a.s.) are needless of such spiritual rewards, nevertheless the All-Graceful and All-Mighty Allah does

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۱- Bihar-ul-Anwar ۹۸:۵

not leave any action ineffective especially if it is done for the sake of His best .creatures

Thirdly, as far as sentimental relations are concerned, reward is the best tool for attracting one's love and affection. People no matter how great and praiseworthy they are, they get pleased by gifts whether material or spiritual. Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), the spiritual axis of the universe and the one needless of others whether spiritually or materially gets pleased with gifts like one flower, one sura of Quran etc. Naturally, he exhibits his reaction to the person presenting the gift and honours him to .express his love once again

Fourthly, there still exist the scope for advancement and perfection for holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Imams (a.s.) even if they possess a lofty position which they do possess. The holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) worshipped Allah and behaved as His slave till his last breath. He was the best of Allah's creations and superior of all the creatures but his .acts of worship made him perfect

A noteworthy point that is said about Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) is that his prayers, fasting, haj, Umra, Ziarat of Imam Husain (a.s.), alms-giving etc leave a deep effect on his soul and makes him perfect spiritually. This very movement and permanent advancement gives him so much strength and power that it prepares himself for fulfilling the heavy universal and divine task (which is unparallel and none except he has to fulfil). It gives him spiritual strength to fulfil his exceptional and onerous divine-.universal duty very easily and all alone

t:۱۲۳

Thus, gifting of any good deed to him or performing any good deed on his behalf supports him and prepares him better to face the difficulties in forming the universal .government based on Quran and monotheism

Fifthly, a sentimental relationship and affection is set up between the giver and receiver of gift. This act will make us pay attention to him and his attention too would focus towards us. It would acquaint us with his customs; it would make our cry for help reach him and would bring for us the fatherly reply. It will link our insignificant heart with his magnificent and shore-less heart; it will connect the brook of our worship with the ocean of his servitude; it will plant the petty sapling and the delicate stem of our life under the shade of that lofty and divine tree and it will give the star of ....our existence the brightness from the moon and sun of his existence

In short, it will make his Imamate (leadership) over us more steadfast and make ourselves more firm in following him. All these are effective if we sincerely and .submissively obey their commands

Lastly, as per traditions, Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) lives an ordinary, natural and usual life. Hazrat too is exposed to natural illness, physical calamities and problems and mental sorrows just like all other people. Thus, alms-giving, invocation, prayers and spiritual gifts (which as per the sayings of Imams discards calamities) keeps away Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) from calamities and leaves their effect on his health.

:About the fact that Imam (a.t.f.s.) lives a usual ordinary life, you may refer to

t:۱۲۴

Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۲:۱۵۶, tradition ۱۶; ۵۱:۲۲۴, tradition ۱۰ and ۳۵۰, tradition ۳; ۵۲:۱۵۲, -
tradition ۳۴

.Discussions on Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) chapter ۶ -

.Aafagh-e-Entezar -

t:۱۲۵

:QUESTION ۲۸

It is well-known that Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) will rise at the time when the earth is filled with tyranny and oppression until he would fill it with justice and equity. So, should we encourage oppression and corruption so that Imam's ' zuhoor ' (manifestation) draws near? Consequently, if oppression and tyranny in the earth is the pre-condition to his coming then what is the duty of the one awaiting him? Should !?he strive to pave the way for such oppression

:REPLY

has come down in traditions in various forms. In يملأُ الأرض عيلا كما ملهت جورا :The sentence the noble book 'Bihar-ul-Anwar' alone, ۳۱ such cases have come down with slight variations in their expressions. However, the contents and contexts of expression of none of these traditions reveal that oppression is pre-condition to 'zuhoor '. Rather it expresses one of the two positions: The first position is the position of goodness and piety and the second one the position of oppression and corruption. Position or background is one thing and pre-condition

t:۱۲۷

:another thing. The below example brings nearer the concept of tradition

For example you inform your friend: 'I will visit you on Friday evening. Does this sentence imply that your visit depends on Friday and if you fail on Friday, your visit is cancelled or it implies that Friday is the course (of time) and not pre-condition of your visit with your friend? Thus, there exists the possibility and probability of visit on another day and if we wished to set conditions we would say, "My condition for ".visiting you is approach of Friday

Secondly, there exists a clear difference between man's duties and the natural and forcible occurrences. From the viewpoint of Islam, Quran, traditions of Ahl'ul-bayt and reason, prevention of corruption, training and development on the path of servitude, observance of piety and purity, recognition of God, prophethood, Imamate and Ma'ad and acting on one's creed are man's duties. Thus, numerous traditions have come down concerning man's duties during the concealment period and these traditions lay .great emphasis on acting upon these aforesaid duties

To sum up, the matter of earth getting filled with oppression and corruption is one of the two courses of Imam Mahdi's 'zuhoor' and not a single course nor a pre-condition. It's our duty to create the other course i.e., goodness and piety. In other words, these traditions reveal the state and common social events at the time of 'z uhoor ' and the traditions about 'Entezar-e-faraj' determine an individual's duty during 'ghaibat ' (concealment) where the person doing ' Enterzar ' (awaiting) must be good and pious .and its never right to mingle these two matters together

t:۱۲۸

-:About this matter, you may refer to the following book

(Khorshid-e-Maghreb: ۲۵۷-۳۳۴ (chapter ۱۳ -

Painvande-Ma'navi -

Translation of Mekyal'ul-Makarem ۲:۱۶۵-۶۱۳ -

(.Ma'refate-Imam Asr (a.t.f.s -

.Discussions on Imam-e-Zaman, chapter ۱۱ -

Najme-Saqeb, chapter ۱۰ -

t:۱۲۹

:QUESTION ۲۹

How do the companions of other Imams (a.s.) differ from the companions of Imam-e-?(.Zaman's (a.t.f.s

:REPLY

The companions of Badr possessed special purity. They enjoyed extraordinary faith and patience and supported the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.). At that time when Islam was left in isolation, they defended Islam and the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) with their small number and meagre means. They achieved intuitive faith. They witnessed the truth with their very eyes. They numbered ۳۱۳. They became a good example of sacrifice .for others

Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) companions would number the same as the companions of Badr. Their high and lofty position is so great that the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) sends greetings upon them and longs to meet them. A day the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) was .sitting inside the mosque. A few of his companions too were present

t:۱۳۱

"يا ليتنى لقيت إخوانى" '.He said: 'I wish I could meet your brethren

Abu-Bakr stood on his feet and said, 'Aren't we your brethren? Aren't we your believers? Didn't we migrate along with you? The holy messenger (s.a.w.a.) replied, 'You all do believe in me, you all have migrated with me too, nevertheless (you are not '!my brethren) I wish I could meet my brethren

.This time Omar stood up. He repeated the same remarks and heard the same reply

For the third time, the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: 'My brethren are those who have not seen me but believe in me.' At the end, he once again said: "يا ليتنى لقيت إخوانى" (١)

They possess numerous special qualities. They enjoy strong faith and belief. At times of test and examination in lawful and unlawful matters, they take utmost care. They cling on to the Quran and Ahl'ul-bayt . If they happen to die while awaiting their master, they will return to life during his ' zuhoor '. Their guts and courage is as strong as iron. (٢) Each one possesses the power of forty warriors. Their physical strength is not their only power; they also possess spiritual strength and will-power. Each one (sees himself in the existence of others.(٣

No Imam (a.s.) possessed this number of loyal and faithful companions. Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.) said: 'If I possessed forty warriors, I would have revolted."(۴) If Imam

t:١٣٢

Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵٢:١٣٢, tradition ٣۶ -١

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۴٨۶, tradition ١; narrated from Yanabi'ul-Muwadda -٢

.Ibid, tradition ٣ -٣

Commentary of Ibn Abil-Hadid ٢:۴٧ -۴

Hasan (a.s.) too possessed the required number of companions, he would have fought and not entered into peace treaty with Muawiya. Imam Husain (a.s.) had ٧٢ loyal companions and they became famous world-wide for their will-power, faith and martyrdom. None of the subsequent Imams (a.s.) possessed ٣١٣ loyal companions. From Imam-e-Sajjad (a.s.) onwards, the Imams (a.s.) only got the chance of spreading Shiite creed and jurisprudence and this was more so during the time of .(.Imam Baqir (a.s.) and Imam Sadiq (a.s

Situation became more severe during the time of Imam Musa-ibn-Jafar (a.s.). They imprisoned Hazrat for ١۴ years. Thereafter, they sent Imam Reza (a.s.) into exile to Khorasan. The eight Imam (a.s.) found little opportunity in spread the Shiite thought. He held a vital debate with followers of various religions and in that debate he .(.defended the true Islamic thoughts based on the method set by Ahl'ul-bayt (a.s

Thereafter, the pressure on Imams (a.s.) gained momentum such that Imam Hadi (a.s.) and Imam Askari (a.s.) were kept in garrison under the vigilance of the caliph's military. For this reason, they were given the title ' Askar i' (military) simply because they were under military siege. Thereafter, there arose no opportunity for the Shiites .(.and their Imams (a.s.) until the rise of the promised Mahdi (a.t.f.s

Although for all phenomenons, the Divine Will is a condition, yet, as per Divine Wisdom, the ready ground-work too is very important. The read ground-work for Imam-e-Zaman's rule comprises of pure, loyal, upright, pious, brave and self-sacrificing companions who prepare

t:١٣٣

the world for the just government of Imam (a.t.f.s.) and we await them: اللهم إنا نرغب إليك فى دوله كريمه

About duties and operations of Imams (a.s.) refer to the following books:

- Zendegani'ye-Pishwayan, Vol ۱-۱۲

- The role of Imams (a.s.) in revival of religion, Vol ۱

- Introduction to Meraat'ul-Uqool (Arabic), Vol ۱ ۲.

- A'immatuna (Arabic), Vol ۱ ۲.

- Bargozidegan, Vol ۱-۱۴

- Chahardeh Akhtare-Taabnak.

- Zendegani Imamaan be-zabane-sadeh.

- Muntahi'ul-Aamal-Fi-Tavarikh an-Nabi wa Aal.

- Qadatuna Kaifa Na'rafahum? (Arabic)

- Manaqeb Aale Abi-Talib (Arabic), Vol ۱-۳

t:۱۳۴

:QUESTION ۳۰

Is it possible to establish connection with Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) in the usual and normal manner or the condition for such meeting is abandonment of worldly life and ?engaging oneself vigorously in spiritual life and in short leading a monastic life

:REPLY

What is meant by connection? Do you mean spiritual and heartily connection or apparent and physical connection? By apparent connection is meant we should have relationship and social mingling with Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) (who lives in the society and sees us and we too see him but do not recognize him). This type of connection is not possible during major concealment. It has come down in traditions that people see him but do not recognize him.(۱) So anyone claiming that he can have

t:۱۳۵

.Kafi ۱:۳۳۷, tradition ۶ -۱

.apparent connection as per his own free-will is something unacceptable

About spiritual connection, the Almighty Allah describes it in the following verse from :the holy Quran

يا أيها الذين امنوا اصبروا و صابروا و رابطوا

This noble verse that has been interpreted in traditions in connection with Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) gives the following meaning:

O you who believe! Be patient and excel (over others) in patience and establish a" (link." (١

:In interpretation of the last part of verse, traditions say

و رابطوا مع إمامكم المنتظر

(And establish a link with your Imam, the awaited one ."(٢ "

This tradition does not inform how one can establish apparent connection and link with Hazrat during his concealment. That connection which has been commanded is spiritual while apparent connection is not possible except by Imam's own guidance .and permission

Secondly, as per traditions, Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) walks in the market-places and on carpets of people. It is likely he purchases his requirements from their shops and (stores and participates in their social gatherings.(٣

t:١٣۶

Aale-Imran (٣):٢٠٠ -١

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ٥١٥, tradition ٨ -٢

.Bihar-ul-Anwar ٥١:١۴٢, tradition ١ -٣

Such expressions reveal that Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) lives a usual and ordinary life (even though he enjoys a lofty position in existence). He travels; he connects himself with the people; he visits mosques; he goes for pilgrimage to Karbala; he perform the Umra ; he perform the Haj etc etc of course by making use of the means at his disposal. Thus, he lives a special type of ordinary and normal life.

Thirdly, the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Imams (a.s.) had two aspects: human and divine. They were human-beings and also had links with the world of revelation. Looking at the human and apparent aspect, they were innate and normal human-beings. Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) too is the same. Regarding human qualities and characteristics, he is alike all other human-beings except that he possess the highest human perfections and virtues.

When we greet an ordinary human-being, he replies our greetings. When we take one step out of love and affection for him he reacts back. Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) [whose heart is specially filled with love and affection] is the heir to the affectionate prophet; he possesses the love and affectionate that Imam Ali possessed; the bravery that Imam Husain possessed and the steadfastness that Imam Hasan possessed. He is extremely kind and sympathetic and the complete and perfect proof of the famous tradition of Imam Reza (a.s.) who while describing an Imam says:

"الإمام الآنيس الرفيق و الوالد الشفيق و الأم البره بالولد الصغير......"

Imam is like an affectionate friend; like a sympathetic father; like a mother who is compassionate and cares for her infant child.

t:۱۳۷

Verily, Imam is like a pool. Imam is like the blessed rain. Imam is like the glowing .moon that brings comfort. Imam is like the sun that gives life

.Thus, Imam surely reacts to our actions

Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) pure ocean of love is so immense that anyone who establishes the minutest relationship with him even as narrow as one string of hair will arouse his sentiments and Hazrat's grace and favours will shower upon him like a .blessed rain

The prophets and Imams are lofty and superior human-beings and in kindness and affection unparallel. They care and devote their efforts in guiding mankind. Thus, relationship during the concealment period is of spiritual nature; it is connection of .heart

This type of spiritual relationship is possible by two means: One is taking guard of one's deeds and behaviour and the other is inner make-up or creation of inner resemblance. For instance, if a person wishes to visit an eminent religious personality or visit a devout 'Marja'h ', he should perform two tasks. One that he should prepare his apparent clothes suitable for such a occasion and secondly create a resemblance in thoughts and feelings. He should match his temper and manners with his temperament and should have sincerity and heartily inclination towards him so that .he can gain the maximum knowledge and spirituality

If such circumstance is created, a connection can be set with Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) too. For this reason, we should strive on his path. We should pray for his ' faraj '. We should recite the ' ziarats ' that have come to our hands. We should give charity for Hazrat's well-being. We

should present the spiritual rewards to him. On his behalf, we should perform haj, Umra and Z iarat of Imam Husain (a.s.); help the needy and visit the Shiite orphans. By such means, one can gain spiritual relationship with him.

Hazrat too has promised that whoever establishes relationship with him would not be forsaken or forgotten by him. It has come down in books of traditions that Hazrat informs Shaikh Mufid that:

"We are not heedless of assisting our Shiites and we aren't forgetful of you ." (١)

This famous sentence reveals Hazrat's affection and also shows that he takes care of the Shiites. In short, how to establish relationship with Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.)? Reply: Inwardly and outwardly, one should observe the lawful and unlawful commandments and spiritually and heartily, one should have love towards Imam (a.t.f.s.) so that the spiritual connection is set. One should never forget Hazrat and rather remember him in all spheres of life. Hazrat too has said, 'Anyone who lives in such manner shall be guarded and supported by us and we shall never forsake him.'

Consequently, during the major concealment period, we see many who were eager to meet Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) have indeed met success. Similarly, those who strived to gain Hazrat's satisfaction and have set spiritual relation with him (even though they weren't fortunate to seen him by the physical eye) have seen their life showered by Divine Grace.

t:١٣٩

١- Ehtejaj ٢:۴٩٧

At the end, we remind you of some necessary points that are tools for establishing relationship with Hazrat. Anyhow steadfast on implementing these points can lead .(.him in establishing a spiritual link and connection with Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s

-:A desirous and enthusiastic person should observe the following

.Recite verses from the holy Quran every day and gift it to Hazrat *

In ' Qunoot ' of daily prayers, he should pray for Hazrat's 'faraj ' particularly recite * 'dua' of " Allah-humma-Kun-le-Waliyek ...." which is the ' dua ' of night of ۲۳rd Ramzan and amongst the 'duas ' during 'nights of destiny' (Lailat'ul-Qadr). It's worthy to mention that the night of ۲۳rd Ramzan in all probability is 'Laitat'ul-Qadr' and earmarking this 'd ua ' to such a night reveals the loftiness and profundity of this ' dua .'

He should give out charity no matter how small every morning for Hazrat's well- * .being

Once or twice a week, he should address Hazrat by the famous 'Ziarat-e-Aale - * .Yasin ' and express his beliefs before him

.On Fridays, he should recite the ' Ziarats ' that are exclusive to Hazrat *

He should invite the people to the best of worships during major concealment which * .(is 'Entezar-e-faraj' (awaiting deliverance

.He should notify Hazrat's friends and followers to have love and affection for him *

t:۱۴۰

With utmost preciseness, he should enjoin the good and forbid the evil (with this * .(motive that he wishes to prepare the ground and society for Hazrat's manifestation

He should endeavour and make utmost effort in performing the obligatory acts and * .keeping distance from the unlawful acts

It is highly hoped that the one who remains steadfast in performing the above deeds will attract Hazrat's special attention and will pave the way for establishing a firm .spiritual relation with his noble master

:In this connection, you may refer to the following books

(Persian) translation of Mekyal'ul-Makarem ۱:۶۷-۶۳۱ (fourth and fifth section) -

Persian) translation of Mekyal'ul-Makarem ۲:۱۶۵-۶۱۳) -

(Muntakhab-ul-Athar (Arabic): ۶۳۵ (chapter ۱۰, section ۳ -

.'Mehre-Mahboob, section related to 'Entezar -

.Ma'refate-Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.), section ۲ -

t:۱۴۱

Section:۲

Point

t:۱۴۳

:QUESTION ۱

The Almighty Allah reckons Himself to be Sufficient as the Helper of mankind and in this regard, verse ۳۱ from Sura Furqan explicitly says, "كفى بربـك هاديـا و نصـيرا" " And sufficient is your Lord as a Guide and a Helper ." Or verse ۳۶ from Sura Zumar says, "أليس الله بكـاف عبـده؟" " Is not Allah sufficient for His servant ?" But, in Dua'e-Faraj of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), we recite, "اكفيـانى فانكمـا كافيـان و انصـرانى فانكما ناصـران" " Suffice me (solve my affairs) for you both are sufficient (as solver of my affairs); and help me for you both are my helpers ." In continuation of this 'dua' , we say:

"يـا مولانـا يا صاحب الزمان! الغوث الغوث الغوث" " O my master, O the master of the age! Help me, help me, and help me ." In other words, we seek help from Allah's messenger (s.a.w.a.), Amir-ul-Mu'mineen (a.s.) and Saheb-e-Zaman

t:۱۴۵

a.t.f.s.) and we reckon all of them to be sufficient as our helpers. Don't these two) ?issues contradict one another

:REPLY

The point that Allah is Sufficient as a Helper for His servants does not contradict with the fact that man seeks help from his fellow human-beings. Allah helps mankind in two ways: One in direct form without any medium and the other through some .creature who has been created and bestowed power by Himself

By Essence, Allah's help is independent and He is the source of every power and might. On the other hand, help from others takes effect by His Will and Power. Some examples of help via medium: Allah helps the living creatures to subsist via the sun; helps vegetation to grow via the rain; helps man to move from one place to another via the animals. In all these cases, Allah is the Helper but via some medium. The holy :verse ٧١ from Sura Yasin says

DO THEY NOT SEE THAT WE HAVE CREATED CATTLE FOR THEM, OUT OF WHAT " "?OUR HANDS HAVE WROUGHT, SO THEY ARE THEIR MASTERS

These creatures are helpers too but nobody says their help contradicts Allah's Help. Rather their help is by Allah's Will and they derive the power of help from the Beneficent Allah. Thus, we find in the holy Quran verses that exclusively declares help to be from Allah ["AND VICTORY IS ONLY FROM ALLAH, THE MIGHTY, THE WISE"] (١) or ["THEE ONLY WE WORSHIP AND THEE ONLY WE BESEECH FOR

Aale-Imran / ١٢۶ -١

HELP"](١). At the same time, the holy Quran also talks about seeking help from creatures and other means like, "SEEK HELP THROUGH PATIENCE AND PRAYER"(٢) or "AND HELP ONE ANOTHER IN GOODNESS AND PIETY"(٣) or "AND IF THEY SEEK HELP FROM YOU IN THE MATTER OF RELIGION, THEN HELP IS INCUMBENT ON YOU".(۴)

Such verses clearly reveal that there exists no contradiction between exclusive help from Allah and the power bestowed by Allah to other helpers.

Help from the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.) and Imam-e-Zaman (a.s.) is exactly Allah's Help. That which contradicts divine monotheism is the belief that someone can possess independent power without having to rely on Allah's Will and Authority. In our daily routine affairs, we seek help from one another as well as from nature and industry and nobody considers this to contradict Allah's Help. In beseeching help by Allah's Will, it makes no difference whether it is the world of nature or the supernatural world.

Regarding invocation and beseeching help from the immaculate Imams (a.s.) and Ziarat of Imam-e-Zaman (a.s.), you may refer to:

- Rabiul-Anam Fi Adeiya Khairul-Anam

- Bihar-ul-Anwar: ١٠٢

- Munthakhab-ul-Athar: ۵٠١ ۵٠٩

- Najm-Saqeb: ۵٩٢

- Translation of Mekyal'ul-Makarem, Vol ١

t:١۴٧

١- Fatehah / ۵

٢- Baqarah / ۴۵

٣- Maidah / ٢

۴- Anfal / ٧٢

:QUESTION ۲

How do the Imams (a.s.) as well as Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) know the deeds, thoughts and reflection of others? Are they acquainted in the same manner as Allah has dominance over the thoughts of human-beings? Are they aware of the smallest thought that can pass in one's mind? If the reply is positive, then how does their ?knowledge differ with Allah's Knowledge

:REPLY

On the one hand, this query is related to monotheism and from the other side, related to prophethood and Imamat. About the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Imams (a.s.), the Shiites believe that the Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) and Imams (a.s.) power are from Allah and by His Will. They have learnt this monotheistic matter from the holy Quran. According to verse ۴۹ from Suran Aale-Imran, prophet Isa (a.s.) says, "I heal the blind and the

t:۱۴۹

leprous, and bring the dead to life with Allah's permission". Thus, on the basis of the Quran, possession of such divine power and knowledge is not impossible if Allah .Wishes to bestow them to whomsoever He desires

The holy Quran narrates that one around Hazrat Sulaiman's had the knowledge of the Book (partly). Allah bestowed him with such power and knowledge that he brought before Hazrat Sulaiman, the throne of the queen of Saba from the country of Saba in the twinkling of an eye.(١) In another similar incident, the Quran authenticates the power of one Jinn(٢). The same applies to the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the immaculate Imams (a.s.). It is not impossible nor beyond Allah's Power to bestow such .knowledge to whomsoever He wishes

The precise and monotheistic point lies in the very concept and meaning of the phrase, "Allah's permission". We know that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Imams (a.s.) do not possess any independent power and knowledge by themselves but whatever they possess is from Allah and by His permission. We should be clear on whether power and knowledge is possessed independently or not or whether they are inherent in human beings or not. In such a case, numerous issues related to monotheism and Quran would become clear for us. As per the Quran and Shiite belief, all power and knowledge is inherently and independently possessed by Allah only and .is bestowed to other creatures by His permission

The honourable Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and immaculate Imams (a.s.) have traversed on this very path in all the dimensions of their life. They strived to explain to the

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١- Name / ۴٠

٢- Naml / ٣٩

people that every possession is by Allah's permission in order that people do not .deviate from serving Allah

: At one place, (the Prophet) says

"لو كنتُ أعلمُ الغيب لاستكثرتُ من الخير"

HAD I KNOWN THE UNSEEN I WOULD HAVE HAD MUCH OF GOOD AND NO EVIL" (WOULD HAVE TOUCHED ME".(١)

:On the other hand, it has come down that

ثم دنا فتدلى فكان قاب قوسين أو أدنى فأوحى الى عبده ما أوحى....لفد رأى من ايات ربه الكبرى"

THEN HE DREW NEAR, THEN HE BOWED, SO HE WAS THE MEASURE OF TWO BOWS" OR CLOSER STILL. AND HE REVEALED TO HIS SERVANT WHAT HE (REVEALED............CERTAINLY HE SAW OF THE GREATEST SIGNS OF HIS LORD".(٢)

About the holy Prophet's knowledge and power, you may refer to Bihar-ul-Anwar .١٧:١٣٠ onwards

The answer to the question whether it is possible for Allah to give the knowledge of the first and the last to them is obviously positive otherwise we have tied Allah's hands. Based on this rational reasoning, Imams (a.s.) have argued and said, "Isnt it possible for Allah to bestow abundant knowledge to an ant? Then, they continue and ."say, We are no less than an ant

t:١٥١

١- A'raf / ١٨٨

٢- Najm / ٨ onwards.

However, from the viewpoint of narrations from the holy Quran and hadith, the Almighty Allah, His Prophet and Imams have narrated a lot about their respective knowledge. In the book of Kafi, Vol ۱ we find a chapter concerning knowledge of the Prophet and Imams.

Thus, bestowing knowledge does not necessarily create a partner for Allah. His Knowledge is independent and inherent while their knowledge is gifted and bestowed.

Another vital point worthy of mention is that the key of their knowledge and power has been handed over to them by Allah. Whenever they wish, they apply the key and gain knowledge and acquiantacne. However, the master key is with Allah and by His permission. In a hadith, it has come down as follows:-

إذا شاؤوا أن يعلموا علموا

"The knowledge of Imams is such that whenever they desire to know something, they know".(۱)

In numerous other hadith, they say:

ما علم ما كان و ما يكون و ما هُو كائن

"We have knowledge of the past, present and future".

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says, "I possess knowledge of the heavens and the earth just the way I see the palm of my hand". (۲)

t:۱۵۲

۱- Bihar-ul-Anwar ۹۲:۹۵, hadith ۵۰

۲- Bihar-ul-Anwar: ۱۰۱, hadith ۷۶

To sum up, Allah's Knowledge is independent and inherent and the knowledge of the Prophet and Imams is gifted by Allah. Rationally too, such gifted knowledge and power is not impossible and the holy Quran and hadith authenticate this matter. Besides, their knowledge is a key that is in their hands by Allah's permission. Such .talks never leads to partnership and similarity between Allah and His servants

About the knowledge of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Imams (a.s.), refer to the following :books

- Khorshid-e-Maghreb (Sun from the west), chapter ٨

- Ma'refat-e-Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) ٢۶٩

- Usool-Kafi, ١

- Basaer al-Darejaat

- Bihar-ul-Anwar, ٢۶

t:١۵٣

:QUESTION ٣

What is the meaning and explanation of verse ۵ from Sura Qasas well-known about ? Hazrat Mahdi's (a.t.f.s.) advent and government

:REPLY

:The concerned holy verse says

"و نُريدُ أن نمُن على الذين استُضعفُوا فى الأرض و نجعلهُم أئمه و نجعلهُمُ الوارثين"

And We desired to bestow a favour upon those who were deemed weak in the land, " ." and to make them the Imams, and to make them the heirs

Under the aforesaid verse, Sayyed Hashim Bahrani writes in the book "Al-Mahajjah" -:as follows

t:۱۵۵

Imam Baqir (a.s.) and Imam Sadiq (a.s.) have narrated that in this verse, Firaun and" Haaman are the two Quraish tyrants who would be given life by Allah during the rising of the "Qaem" at the end of time and Imam-e-Zaman would take vengeanc from ".them

This as well as other hadith clarify that by "Imams" and "heirs" in the holy verse is meant Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) and his followers who would rule in the entire land and .hoist the flag of monotheism

:For more information, refer to

Al-Mahajjah (Arabic): ۱۶۸ -

.Al-Burhan (Arabic), below verse ۵ / Sura Qasas -

.Nur-ul-Saqalain (Arabic) ۴:۱۰۷ onwards -

Hazrat Mahdi in the Quran: ۲۹۶ -

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), from birth to reapprance: ۶۳-۶۸ -

Khorshid-e-Maghreb: ۱۱۳-۱۲۲ -

t:۱۵۶

:QUESTION ۴

?Can one find any prophecy about Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) in the past heavenly books

:REPLY

Just as explicitly mentioned by the holy Quran, even tthough the old and new testament as well as other books have been distorted, nevertheless glad tidings about Hazrat can still be found in such distorted books. In other words, the hands of distorters have failed to reverse the entire truth. For instance, about the global divine -:saviour, it had come down in the old testament, psalm ۳۷, line ۸ onwards as follows

Cast aside anger and desist from rage; do not agitate yourself.......as the evil ones" (would be severed and the divine ones awaiting would inherit the land ".(۱

t:۱۵۷

Old Testament, ۱۹۳۶ edition, page ۸۵۶ -۱

-:In the Old Testament, chapter ۲, verses ۷-۹, it has come down as follows

I will turn shaky all the nations and (then) virtue would grace the entire nations and " Jehovah would say, I will fill this house with splendour. The Jehovah would say, Gold and silver is from me. Jehovah would say, The last glory of this house would be more (magnificent than its first glory ".(۱

:In the Old Testament, chapter ۳ verse ۹ says

Because at time, I would give pure tongue to all the nations until the entire lot of" (them would call the name of Jehovah and would worship him with one heart ".(۲

:In the new testament (Bible), Gospel of Mathew, chapter ۲۵, line ۳۴ onwards, we read

come O the ones who have found grace from my Father, inherit the celestial ..... (kingdom that has been prepared for you right from the beginning of the world (۳

:Moreover, in the revelation of John, chapter ۲, line ۲۶-۲۷

The one who prevails and uphods my deeds in practice, I would make him dominant" (over other nations until he would rule with an iron fist" .(۴

t:۱۵۸

Old Testament: ۱۳۶۷ -۱

Old Testament: ۱۳۶۴ -۲

New Testament: ۴۴ -۳

New Testament: ۳۹۸-۳۹۹ -۴

: (Below the word "Sushiyant" it has come down in the Persian encyclopedia (۱:۱۳۷۳

It is the title of each of the three promised ones in Zorasterians particularly pertaining to the last promised one named as Astutert in Avesta . He is remembered as Sushiyant the victor. Sushiyant Mazdeyasnan is like the Krishna of Brahmins; Buddah the ۵th of Buddist; Massiah of Jews; Paraclete of Christians and Mahdi of the Muslims. .The Zorasterians await three promised ones

We notice that the old testament (Torah) and the new testament (Bible) give glad tidings about the promised one such that in spite of the distortions therein, it clearly .shows the program of the promised one i.e., Mahdi of Islam

-:In this regard, you may refer to the following books

- .Glad Tidings of the two testaments ۲۳۴ onwards
- Days of salvation: ۵۶۶-۵۷۷
- Khorshid-e-Maghreb, chapter ۴ ۵
- Fajr-e-Sahel : ۳۷
- Discussions on Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.): ۱۳
- .He shall come

t:۱۵۹

:QUESTION ۵

What customs and resemblance does Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) has in common with the ?past prophets

:REPLY

إن فی صاحب هذا الأمر سُنن من الأنبياء : سنةٌ من موسی و.....

Verily, the master of the affairs (i.e. Hazrat Mahdi) possesses the characteristic of the" prophets; he bears resemblance with Musa and........." (Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۳۰۱, (hadith ۵

This is the most famous remark revealing the resemblance of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) with Hazrat Adam (a.s.), Nuh (a.s.), Ibrahim (a.s.), Musa (a.s.), Isa (a.s.) and the holy .(.Prophet (s.a.w.a

He bears a resembles to Adam and Nuh in longevity. It has come down in the holy Quran that before the occurance of storm, Hazrat Nuh had lived for ۹۵۰

t:۱۶۱

years.(۱) As per historical evidences and traditions, he lived a long life even after the event of storm. His likeness to Ibrahim (a.s.) is his secret birth and his isolation from the people. The trait similar to Musa (a.s.) is his fear and hope. In explanation of this fear, two points have been discussed: One that when Musa abandoned his tribe and left the city he disappeared for a while and then, entered the city with "fear".(۲) He feared lest the people would recognise him. For this reason, Imam-e-Zaman's disappearance is likened to the period of disapperance of Hazrat Musa (a.s.). Another similarity is the fear for Musa's secret birth. By Allah's Will, Musa (a.s.) was born safe and sound and grew up in Firaun's palace. Just like Firaun who was in search for Musa (a.s.), the Abbassid Caliphs too were on the track of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) but failed to find him. They had news that someone from the holy Prophet's progeny would come and destroy the tyrants and their government. Nevertheless, Imam-e-Zaman (a.s.) took birth in the military campus of the ruling government under divine .protection

His similarity with Hazrat Isa (a.s.) lies in this that a few say, "Isa has been born and killed". Another group says, "He has not been born......." The same talks are uttered about Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.) too. A few say, "He is not yet born" while others say, "He is ."born and has died

He resembles the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in two things: One is his uprising with the sword and the other is that he would re-establish Islam from its very pillar. When he would come and present Islam before the people, they would say,"This appears to be a new religion"(۳) This is

t:۱۶۲

Ankabut (۲۹):۱۴ -۱

Qasas (۲۸):۱۸ ۲۱ -۲

Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۲:۲۳۱ ۳۴۹ -۳

because during the length of time, the Islamic ordinances would undergo a change and the meanings and concepts of Quran would be so distorted that when he would introduce Islam and Quran to the people, they would say, "This is a new faith; these are new sayings and a new religion". In reality, this is not true. Rather, it would be presentation of the real Islam which appears new to the people. The holy Prophet :(s.a.w.a.) said

(Mahdi shall follow my way, and he shall never forsake my sunnah ".(١) "

:The holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) also said

"إنهُ مُتبع لا مُبتدع...."

"......... He (Mahdi) shall be the follower (of my sunnah); not a heretic "

Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.) bears resemblance to other prophets too like Yusuf (a.s.) who remained concealed from the people including his brothers and the matter of people seeing him but not recognising his identity; or like Ayub (a.s.) in patience and .deliverance

:In this regard, you may refer to

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ٣٠٠ -

Days of salvation ٢:٥٩١ -

Fajr-e-Sahel -

Al-Mahdi:٨١ -

Khorshid-e-Maghreb: ٢٠ ١٧٣ -

Muntaqam-e-Haqiqi : ١٨٦-١٨٨ -

t:١۶٣

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۴٩١ -١

:QUESTION ۶

How is Imam's apparent dressing at present and what would be his dressing during his advent? Does he wear modern and common clothes like the common mass or ?does he wear some special clothes

:REPLY

About the garb and appearance of all the Imams (a.s.) suffice it is to say that they never appeared and dressed in a manner to earn for themselves special distinctions. In all their affairs, they lived a moderate life. The essential condition of moderation is to live among the common society and to proceed along with them (as long as it .(doesn't lead to sin

-:To elaborate this matter, it is necessary to remind the following points

t:۱۶۵

۱. Whenever the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) would sit together with a group of people, none could tell one from the other. He would not earmark a special place for himself. When a stranger would arrive, he couldn’t distinguish the Prophet among the crowd.(۱) From this practice, it becomes clear that his apperance and dress was like the common people.

We conclude from the Prophet's sunnah that Imam-e-Zaman's dress is in harmony with the clothing of the common mass (as long as it is not forbidden or disapproved and is not inappropriate with Imam's lofty position). Imam avoids clothing that may attract the attention of hundreds of thousands of people. During his reappearance, he would dress like the people of that time except if that dress is inappropriate with Islamic principles. In such a case, his followers too would wear clothes like their Imam.

۲. About his dress, it has come down in a tradition in Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۲:۳۵۴

ما لباسُه إلا الغليظُ و ما طعامُه إلا الجشبُ

"His dress is coarse and his food very simple".

From this noble tradition, we conclude that his dress isnt soft and comfortable but rather rough, thick and coarse. Besides, its colour, quality and design are not in a manner that gives special distinction over other peoples' dress. The immaculate Imams (a.s.) have themselves

t:۱۶۶

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۱ - In this regard, you may refer to the book, "Sunan-Nabi" by Allamah Sayyed Mohammad Husain Tabatabai and "Tutiya-Deedegan" part ۲.

recommended that: "Live in the society while not making yourself conspicuous". In confirmation of this saying, it has come down in Shiite fiqh that it is unlawful and forbidden for a male to wear a female dress or a female to wear a male dress or for anyone to wear any distinctive clothes. The jurists have given a decree that it is unlawful to wear distinctive clothes.(۱) Distinctive clothes means a dress worn by someone who makes himself conspicuous among the people such that they say,"Look ."at him, he is wearing such and such dress

From this point, one can understand that Imam's dress is an ordinary and common .dress

Those who were fortunate in visiting him, have seen him in ordinary and sober native dress. In the haj journey, he has been seen in the dress of the Arabs; in Najaf in the dress of the clerics and at other places in ordinary clothes such that he has not .attracted the people's attention

All these are probabilities acquired from general rules and principles. But its exact .details specially at the time of his advent is only known to Allah

In this regard as well as the topic concerning dress of prophets and Imams, you may :refer to

Bihar-ul-Anwar ۷۷:۹۷; ۷۰:۳۲۱ and ۸۱:۳۴۱ -

Asr-e-Zindagi, section ۱۹ -

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۲۳۹-۲۴۲ -

t:۱۶۷

Bihar-ul-Anwar ۷۰:۲۵۲, treatise on Tauzee-ul-Ma'sael, rules about dress of - ۱ .worshipper

:QUESTION ٧

In Ziarat of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), we read, "Salaamun-ala-Aale-Yasin". By virtue of verse ١٣٠ of Sura Saffat (Salaamun-Ala-El-Yasin), "Aale-Yasin" is interpreted to be the holy Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) progeny and Imam-e-Zaman (a.s.). Please elaborate on .this subject

:REPLY

One recitation is "Aale-Yasin" and the other recitation is "El-Yasin" and the difference in recitation does not imply distortion of the holy Quran. Distortion takes place when there is a major change or additions in the verses by the fabricators while difference in recitation (that is normally rooted in dialect and accent of various tribes) occurs in less significant cases. The common Sunnis have different ways of recitation with .respect to most of the verses

t:١۶٩

In the beginning of Ziarat Aale-Yasin we read, "Salaamun-Ala-Aale-Yasin" and we mean Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). The proof that Aale-Yasin refers to the holy Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) progeny and in this particular Ziarat to Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) is that "Yasin" is one name of the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and "Aale-Yasin" are his progeny.

Shiites and Sunnis have both narrated that "Yasin" is one name of the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

We shall review the following references:

(١) Ibne-Abbas has narrated that "Yasin" is Muhammad and verbally has said, O Muhammad!(١)

(٢) Imam Baqir (a.s.) said, "Allah's messenger has twelve names where five of them appear in the Quran: Muhammad, Ahmad, Abdullah, Yasin and Noon".(٢)

In Tafsir (interpretation) of verse ١٣٠, Sura Saffat(٣) it is said that this verse is in honour of Ali (a.s.) and he is from the progeny of "Yasin", the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

Amir-ul-Mumineen (a.s.) says:

"The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is "Yasin" and we are "Aale-Yasin ".

Hafiz Hasakani has narrated from various narrators:

t:١٧٠

١- Durrul-Manthur ٥:٢٥٨

٢- narrated from Tafsir Majma-ul-Bayan Kanz-ul-Daqa'eq ٨:٣٠٨.

٣- Kanz-ul-Daqa'eq Vol ٨

By Aale-Yasin" is meant "Aale-Muhammad" and Ali (a.s.) is among "Aale-" (Muhammad" (progeny of Muhammad).(١)

Thus, it becomes clear that the term "Aale-Yasin" appearing in the traditions refers to .the holy Prophet's (s.a.w.a) progeny

In this regard, you may refer to the below-mentioned Tafsirs under verse ١ from Suran Yasin and under verse ١٣٠ from Sura Saffat

Tafsir Durrul-Manthur -

Tafsir Ahkam al-Quran -

Tafsir Baizaavi -

Tafsir Majma-ul-Bayan -

Tafsir Kanz-ul-Daqa'eq -

Tafsir Tebyaan -

Tafsir Ali-ibn-Ibrahim Qommi -

Tafsir Safi -

Tafsir Al-Mizan -

Tafsir Nur-ul-Saqalain -

t:١٧١

Shavahid al-Tanzeel: ١٠٩-١١٢ -١

:QUESTION ۸

? How can it be proved that Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) is alive and not died

:REPLY

Rationally, if someone's birth, life and living is proved, his death requires proof and not his living. Thus, when we meet someone we never ask him, "why are you still alive"? To be alive after birth is a rational principle. If we hear the death of someone, we immeadiately inquire about the reason of this death – no matter whether he or she is young or aged, healthy or sick we always wish to know the reason of his or her death. In other words, death constantly requires reason. In Ilm-Usul (methodology), this ." rational principle is called as " Esteshab-e-Baqah

However, this principle varies in various instances depending upon its dimensions and length of time. For example, the existence of one stone may continue for

t:۱۷۳

.hundreds of years while that of a rose flower may last for few weeks only

About Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), the matter concerns special divine confirmation and Hazrat's extraordinary power possessed by divine permission. Hazrat enjoys loft power and strenght and in this regard numerous glad tidings and indications have come down like, "He bears resemblance to prophet Nuh (a.s.) in longevity.(۱) Reliable traditions about the birth, life and visitation of numerous people with Imam-e-Zamam (a.t.f.s.) proves that Hazrat is alive and is endowed with powers far above the human .power

So reason deduces that as per the law of " Esteshab ", he is alive except if his death is proved by strong evidences and who can dare make such a claim!? On the contrary, his life, existance and protection of the Islamic community and the Shiites during .major concealment is as clear as broad daylight

For the sake of finalizing the argument, the All-Knowing and Wise Allah has shown this luminous moon to a few special, pure and sincere followers right from the time of .Hazrat's birth till today

: In this regard, you may refer to

Discussions on Imam-e-Zaman (a.s.), chapter ۸ -

Imamat and Mahdaviyat ۳, Glad-tidings about peace and security: ۱۶۵-۲۱۴ -

Khorshid-e-Maghreb, page ۱۹۱-۲۱۵ -

t:۱۷۴

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۳۰۰, hadith ۱ -۱

:QUESTION ۹

Why did Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) have two occultation: ' Sughra' (minor) and ' Kubra ' ? ((major

:REPLY

The holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the Imams (a.s.) have said: "One of the characteristics of the twelfth Imam, Qaem Aale-Muhammad (a.t.f.s.) is that he would have two (occultation: Ghaibat-e-Sughra and Ghaibat-e-Kubra ".(۱

We do not know the real reason behind occultation. However, we can guess that Allah has set the minor occultation for habituating and preparing the people for the major occultation. This guess is supported by traditions where Muhaddith Qomi has brought down in

t:۱۷۵

.Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۲۵۱, hadith ۱ -۱

the second chapter of "Muntahi-ul-Aamal"(۱) in the discussion concerning biography of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.). Besides, the tenth and eleventh Imam concealed themselves from the people as much as possible in order to prepare them for the major occultation.

If Hazrat had major concealment right from the beginning, then perhaps Allah's argument wouldn't be finalized for the people.

In the minor concealment, a group of people would visit Hazrat; his Imamate would be proved for some; his miracles were made apparent; he would help the people directly and people would recognize him. However, if Hazrat was not in the company of his father for five years and right from the year ۲۶۰ A.H. (martyrdom of Imam Hasan Askari), the major concealment would have began, it was possible that the argument would not have been finalized for the majority.

Perhaps we can say that by Allah's Grace and for the sake of finalizing the argument, he spent ۶۹ years of his life in minor concealment i.e., from the year of Imam Askari's martyrdom in ۲۶۰ A.H. till the year ۳۲۹ A.H. In that year, his special envoy, Ali-ibn-Muhammad Samari passed away and by his death the major occultation began. If we count the minor concealment from the start of Imam Mahdi's life, it would be ۷۴ years and if we count from the start of his Imamate, it would be ۶۹ years.

The minor concealment is named so because its duration is shorter and while he remained concealed from the common people, yet a few special figures were fortunate enough to visit him. His envoys (four among

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۱- Muntahi-ul-Aamal ۲:۷۰۳

them being very famous) used to visit him. At times, by acting as an intermediary, others would get chance of meeting Imam. These envoys were reliable figures who would never disclose Imam's place to anyone. They would take only a very few in the presence of Imam (a.t.f.s.). For this reason, this period was named as minor occultation. From ٣٢٩ A.H. began the major occultation. Imam (a.t.f.s.) sent a letter (:Tauqee) to his envoy and therein declared

فقد وقعت الغيبهُ التامهُ

."The absolute (kubra and full) occultation has started"

At this time, nobody could claim the special envoy-ship or claim to meet Imam by his .free will

The major occultation is longer and Imam is concealed from majority of the people. If .anyone is fortunate to see Imam it is by Imam's own desire and will

About this matter, one may refer to "Kamaluddin" of Saduq (page ۴٣۴-۴٧٨) and "Esbaat-ul-Huda" of Shaikh Hur Aameli. In them, they have brought down traditions and narrated incidents of those who have visited Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) during the minor concealment or even before; either during Imam Askari's era of those five years or after the termination of Imam Askari's Imamate; either through an .intermediary (i.e., the envoys) or without them

:For more information, you may refer to

Najm-Saqeb -

Kamaluddin: ۴٣۴-۴٧٨ -

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۴١٢-۴٢٠ -

Esbat'ul-Huda Vol ٧ -

Re'ayat-ul-Imam al-Mahdi -

.Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), from birth till reappearance, chapter ۱۰ -

t:۱۷۸

:QUESTION ١٠

Doesn’t Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) appearance in the society during occultation contradict the very meaning of occultation (ghaibat) and his concealment? Doesn’t ?' such appearance in gatherings nullify ' Ghaibat

:REPLY

Such appearances do not contradict ' Ghaibat ' because people see him but do not recognize him. Hazrat appears only before few exclusive people and majority of the people do not see him. ' Ghaibat ' means that people do not recognize Imam (a.t.f.s.) and are unaware of his special place. It does not give the meaning of non-existent. The best explanation and meaning of ' Ghaibat ' is the very one narrated by Imam :(.Sadiq (a.s

يرونهُ و لا يعرفُونهُ

t:١٧٩

"They see him but do not recognize him ".(1)

Also, Zurarah-ibn-A'yan narrates from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that the "Qaem " would have two ' Ghaibat '. He explained that while in one his place would be known only to a special few, in case of the other, his whereabouts would not be known. Imam continues to say that during hajj, he appears; he sees the people but the people do not see him".(2)

Imam Husain (a.s.) said:

"Except for the servant who looks after his affairs, his place cannot be known ".(3)

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) addressed Sudair:

"How can you deny that Allah acts with him in same manner as Yusuf? He walks in their market place and steps on their rugs. But people do not recognize him except if Allah permits him to introduce himself ".(4)

About the meaning of verse ۱۶ from Sura Takwir, "But nay! I swear by the stars that run their course (and) hide themselves", Imam Baqir (a.s.) said:

"O Umm-Hani, it refers to an Imam who would conceal himself (while he would be among the people) until people would not have news of him ".(5)

Imam Ridha (a.s.) too said:

۱- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۲۵۲, hadith ۴ and ۷-۹

۲- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۳۱۴, hadith ۷ ۸

۳- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۳۱۴, hadith ۴ ۹

۴- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۲۵۵, hadith ۴

۵- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۲۵۶, hadith ۷

He attends the hajj ceremony every year. He performs all the hajj rites. He stands in "the desert of Arafat. He says "Amen" to the prayers uttered by the believers ...."(۱)

-:About this topic, you may refer to the following books

- Kamaluddin: ۳۴۱

- Ghaibat : Shaikh Tusi: ۲۵۳-۲۸۱

- Ghaibat; Nu'mani

- Kafi, Vol ۱

- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۲۵۱-۲۶۵

- Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۱:۲۱۵-۲۲۵ and ۵۲:۹۰-۱۰۰

- Khorshid-e-Maghreb, chapter ۳:۴۱-۴۹

- Discussions on Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), chapter ۴ ۵

- Ruzgaar-e-Reha'ee, Vol ۱, section ۷ ۸

t:۱۸۱

۱- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۲۶۲, hadith ۱۵

:QUESTION ١١

During occultation, Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) has recommended the Shiites to refer to :the narrators of traditions

? 'Are the narrators of traditions the 'Faqihs' and ' Mujtahids -١

How is the relationship between Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) and the narrators and - ٢ Faqihs ? Do they enjoy special relation or are they like the common people? (In other (?words, do they meet Imam

:REPLY

It's necessary to know the meaning of 'Ghaibat-Sughra' (minor occultation) and 'Ghaibat-Kubra' (major occultation). 'Ghaibat-Sughra' was shorter as compared with the later Ghaibat. In 'Ghaibat-Sughra' , the common man could not see Imam but a special group could meet and establish relation with him and by means of Imam's .(.special envoys, they could gain access to Imam (a.t.f.s

t:١٨٣

.Among them, four envoys were very famous who could meet Imam (a.t.f.s.) regularly

Ghaibat-Kubra' is a period wherein none can have access to Imam in the ordinary' way. There is no precise information about him and nobody has any permanent or normal relation with him. However, it does not necessarily leave the people without any duty during this period. Discerning the duties, implementing the ordinances and the Shiites' creed are the responsibility of narrators of traditions and the Faqihs . In this regard, people have been recommended to refer to them because explanation of Fiqh (jurisprudence), Ahkam (precepts) and beliefs is held in high esteem by Imam (a.t.f.s.). Right now, whom should we approach for acquiring such knowledge? We have no alternative but to pay heed to the instructions of our Imams and refer to .those who are well versed in the Imam's traditions

Recourse to the Faqihs and narrators of traditions was something in vogue during the lifetime of Imams too. During the Imamate of Imam Sadiq (a.s.), Hazrat lived in Medina. Those residing in Marv and still many others who lived far away (who weren't fortunate enough to see their Imam even once) were forced to solve their religious problems by referring to the narrators of traditions. However, during those days, .books on precepts (ahkam) were much in brief

The length of time created an extensive basis in Fiqh . During the lifetime of the Imams (a.s.), people directly or indirectly set forth their limited queries before their Imam and hence solved their problems in a very

quick manner. However, during major occultation, things are different and it is the .experts who have to examine the existing traditions in a very scholarly manner

During occultation, except for the holy Quran and traditions, we do not have any other source or authority in religious matters and precepts. The common people too lack the understanding and expertise for deriving the realities and for this reason, they have recommended us to refer to the Faqihs (who are experts in deducing a decree) :for understanding the religious precepts. In this regard, Imam (a.s.) says

" و أما من كان من الفُقهاء صائنا لنفسه حافظا لدينه مُخالفاَ لهواهُ مُطيعاَ لأمر مولاهُ فللعوام أن يقلدُوهُ "

The people can follow a Faqih who possesses self-control; who safeguards his" religion; who opposes his carnal desires and obeys his master (Allah and His hujjat) (".(١

:Also, Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) says

" و أما الحوادثُ الواقعهُ فارجعُوا فيها إلى رُواه أحاديثنا فإنهُم حُجتى عليكم و أنا حُجهُ الله "

During events and happenings, refer to the narrators of our traditions for they are" (my hujjat upon you and I am Allah's hujjat ".(٢

During occultation, those people who have familiarity and liking for Imams' words and sayings are

t:١٨٥

Wasa'el-ul-Shia ١٨: ٩٥, hadith ٢٠ -١

Wasa'el-ul-Shia: ١٠١, hadith ٩ -٢

close to them in thoughts, reflection and mentality. It's possible that among the philosophers, poets, critics, mystics, physicists, scholars, physicians, historians etc someone can be found who has a strong inclination towards Imam (a.t.f.s.) but mental and spiritual proximity is enjoyed only by those who are familiar with their words and .sayings

Their sayings and interpretations form the real framework of his creed and they are the carriers of his knowledge. A Shia should refer to them because they have much deeper knowledge in religious matters and precepts. They have been named as .Imam's Nayeb-e-Aam

Regarding the second query about the Faqihs ' connection with Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) it is better to say that their connection is the same as other common people. It's possible that pious Faqihs (who bear Ahl al-bayt's knowledge and are themselves dignified figures) may meet Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). People like Muqaddas Ardebeli, Allamah Bahrul-Uloom etc and other great Faqihs and scholars were fortunate in meeting Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). However, the Shiites refer to them not simply because they have met Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). There are numerous renowned Faqihs and Muhaddiths whose connection with Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) is not proved or clear for us. For example, it's not clear whether Seqat'ul-Islam Kulaini had ever met Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). Or whether Shaikh Saduq had visited Imam-e-Zaman (a.s.) in wakeful state. Yet, their books are first hand Shiite works and are an old source of . reference for the Faqihs

Their connection with Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) is based on mental and scholarly relationship. They are acquainted with Imam's thoughts and reflection by means of the traditions and the more they are well versed in the traditions, the closer they are to their Imam. History too supports this point. Imam (a.t.f.s.) has constantly expressed special grace and kindness to dignified Faqihs and narrators of traditions. He has .helped them in sensitive matters and has been a strong support for them

:The great Muhaddith Haji Nuri has narrated as follows

One non-Shiite scholar who was Allamah Hilli's teacher in some sciences had written a book against the Shia Imammiah religion and he used to read out this book in gatherings and misguide the people. He would not give his book to anyone for this fear that some Shiite scholar might disprove his book. Allamah constantly thought of acquiring this book so that he would write and refute this book. Anyhow, he utilized the teacher-student relationship and asked for the book. As his teacher didn't wish to reject his request out-rightly, he said, "I have taken promise not to give anyone this book for more than one night". Taking advantage of this opportunity, Allamah took away the book to his house to note down its contents as much as possible. He began writing but when mid-night approached sleep overtook him. Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) ."entered his house and said, "Give me the book and you may continue your sleep

When Allamah awoke he realized that the full book was noted down by the grace of (Imam (a.t.f.s.). (١

.Najme-Saqeb, chapter ٧, event ١٥ with minor change -١

Now that we are living at the time of occultation, we should refer to those who have .(.......been recommended by themselves (... who possess self-control

To sum up, we should refer only to those Faqihs who promote Imam's school of thought; who have love for Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) and are active as students of Imam's school and who call the people towards him (and not themselves). We should .(follow the most learned of them in Ahkam (Islamic precepts

About Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) grace and kindness to his Shiites and the Faqihs , you :may refer to

- Translation of Mekyal'ul-Makarem, ۱:۱۶۸

- Mehre-Mahboob: ۳۱-۴۴

- Naame-Mahboob: ۹۹-۱۰۷

- Sobhe-Omeed: ۱۰۱

- (.Tajalee'ate-Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s

- Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), from birth to reappearance: ۳۳۷-۳۷۴

- Ma'refat-e-Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) ۱۱۶

- Najme-Saqeb: ۵۶۹, chapter ۹

- .Tabserat'ul-Vali

t:۱۸۸

QUESTION ۱۲

? (.Should we accept or reject those who claim to have seen Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s

:REPLY

In reality, one cannot absolutely refute the possibility of seeing Imam during occultation and there exists testimonies to the truthfulness and correctness of this matter in many instances. Renowned and trustworthy figures like Ibrahim Mahziyar, Allamah Hilli, Sayyed-ibn-Taoos, Allamah Bahr'ul-Uloom, Majlisi ۱ and several others have indeed visited Imam (a.t.f.s.). However, their policy and custom was such that they would never spread news of their meeting in the society and would divulge only to a few of their exclusive followers. Besides, they would take an undertaking from their intimate friends not to disclose the matter to anyone during their lifetime and if they wanted and if need arose, they could reveal it after their death and that too only .for the sake of finalizing the argument

t:۱۸۹

However, these are exceptional cases that were divulged by the fortunate ones and .which resulted in ethical and spiritual benefits

It's worthy to mention that it was the custom of great religious figures not to misuse religious privileges for achieving worldly gains or consider them as a means for .promoting their material life

During our times, it has been heard that a few unknown characters have gathered around themselves certain people (particularly illiterate ladies) by this claim that they have direct relation with Imam (a.t.f.s.). They narrate unreliable and unauthentic matters by means of which they brighten up their gatherings and reap material benefits. However, they never involve themselves in discussions and reasoning and close the way of wise people for any type of research and investigation. Also, certain writers exhibit such meetings with Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) to be so easy, low and insignificant that perhaps Hazrat is anxiously waiting to show himself or present some .gift to any rouge in exchange for his two unit prayers or one line Ziarat

We have ourselves seen great personalities who have spent most of their blessed life in propagating the Ahl al-bayt creed and promoting Imam-e-Zaman's name. But they never referred to the matter about visiting Imam (a.t.f.s.). Instead, they encouraged their friends and near ones to recognize and serve their Imam (a.t.f.s.). One witness that brings to light the custom followed by great scholars in their meeting with Imam (a.t.f.s.) is a memento that Sayyed Mahdi Tabatabai Bah'rul-Uloom has experienced .with Mirza Qomi

:Mullah Zain-ul-Abedin Salmasi (student of Bah'rul-Uloom) narrates

After visiting the House of Allah and the graves of Imams (a.s.) in Iraq, Mirza Qomi attended Sayyed Bah'rul-Uloom's class. When all the students left the class, he .requested Sayyed to donate a few of the innumerable bounties that he has acquired

Without any hesitation, Sayyed said, "The night before or two nights before (doubt from narrator's side), I visited the Kufa mosque for performing the supererogatory prayer. I intended to return to Najaf at dawn. I left the mosque very eager to visit the Sahlah mosque. However, I changed my mind from going because I feared my class would close down. On the other hand, my eagerness grew more than before. In such state of uncertainty, a strong wind blew and dust rose in the air. I was driven in that direction. Moments later, I found myself near the door of Sahlah mosque. I entered the mosque and found nobody save a noble man engaged in invocation. His words made one's heart calm and eyes tearful. My state transformed and my heart took off. Tears rolled down. I had never heard such words before. I realized that the one .reciting himself composes and wasn’t reciting out of memory

I stopped and listened to him. I was extremely delighted. He finished his invocation. He turned towards me and said, "Come Mahdi". I went few steps forwards and then stopped. He ordered me to still come forward. Once again, I went a few steps ahead and then stopped. He again asked me to come forward and added, "To obey is good manners". Moments later, I went forward until my hands could reach him. Thereafter, .he uttered some words

:Here, Mullah Zain-ul-Abedeen Salmasi says

When the talk reached this stage, Sayyed refrained to continue and instead started to reply a query that Mirza

t:۱۹۱

had inquired before. However, Mirza asked him what words that man had uttered and Sayyed replied, "It is from the concealed secrets."(1)

Such is the custom of our scholars in safeguarding the secret of meeting. They disclose to the people only to the extent of finalizing the argument before them.

We see how often noble men, scholars and the elect see Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) but divulge this news with great difficulty to others. Of course, their melting state itself reveals that they have been among the fortunate ones. But they have acted in such manner that others are prevented from taking any undue advantage or any illusion or suspicion is done away with.

About meetings with Imam (a.t.f.s.) and matters related to this topic, you may refer to:

- Najme-Saqeb, chapter ۷

- Imam Mahdi, from birth till reappearance: ۳۳۵-۳۷۴

- Muntahi'ul-A'maal ۲: ۸۰۴ onwards.

- Kamaluddin: section concerning meetings with Imam (a.t.f.s.).

- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۵۱۱-۵۲۰

- Tajalee'ate-Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.).

- Mehre-Mahboob: ۳۶

t:۱۹۲

1- Najm-Saqeb: ۴۷۳, Incident ۷۳

:QUESTION ۱۳

We know people who have for years prayed before the Almighty Allah to allow them to meet Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) or at least yearned to see him. Why such enthusiastic ?persons have remained unfortunate

:REPLY

We always have the habit of expecting an immediate reward for the one step we take forward. Among the seminary students, there is a famous saying: "An ignorant is the one who when he recites ۲ units of prayers, expects to receive revelation". In reality, we should evaluate the size of our expectation? Have we strived and struggled to the ?same extent? How far have we acted upon our religious duties

t:۱۹۳

An invocation (named as dua during occultation), has come down in the books on hadith with such expression like, اللهم عرفنی نفسک "." (1) A part of this dua says,

"O Allah! Make me such that I do not turn hasty in that which you have postponed and I do not postpone that which you have given preference."

As a result, firstly, Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) himself commands that, "Pray excessively for hastening faraj (deliverance) and resolving the affairs.(2)

Secondly, we are duty bound to pray constantly and should strive to fulfill our duty.

Thirdly, besides praying, we are eager to see his reappearance.

Fourthly, we are desirous of meeting him. This desire is out of love and not in the form of pressing for something as one's due. Perhaps it may sound impolite to express such sentences like, "Why don't you come? Where are you? So, why don't you appear? We are ready!

On the contrary, it would be more correct to remain satisfied with the Divine destiny while at the same time, we eagerly pray before Allah for Imam's early reappearance.

The Imams (a.s.) trained the people in a special manner. The eagerly desire to meet is one issue while pressing for something as one's due is another matter.

t:194

1- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: 636-640

2- Ehtejaj: By Tabarsi, 2:471

At the time when Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.) was struck with the sword, Imam Hasan (a.s.) came near the door of the house and said, "Our master's condition is very unstable, so please disperse." The people left the place except for a few. One of them was Asbagh-ibn-Nobateh. Imam Hasan (a.s.) said, Why don't you go away? He replied, "Your command to depart leaves us with no responsibility for entering the house. But my legs are unable to move until I see my kind master. Courtesy too, does not allow me to willfully enter the house. Imam Hasan (a.s.) went inside and returned and then said, "Come inside". Asbagh entered and threw himself on Hazrat's feet. (١)

We should behave in this manner before our Imams (a.s.). While keeping intact our manners, we should also express our love and devotion. May Allah shower His Mercy upon one of our great teachers? He possessed a very good ring in his finger. He gifted this ring to one of my friend. Another friend said, why didn't he gift that to us? One said, "If he deemed it advisable he would have gifted it to you as well."

Always, grace descends from top to bottom. He should gift it himself and not that we should count on receiving something. The same teacher said, "I never asked anything from my teacher (in spite of possessing strength and ability). Whatever he gave me was out of grace."

A Shia is keen and eager to meet Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) but this eagerness is not in the form of claim for some due. We are very insignificant and no figure to

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١- Muntahi-ul-A'maal, ١:٣٣۶

claim something as our due.(۱) We should pave the background of our heart and life in such manner that he himself showers his grace as we are unaware of what is to our .interest

It's likely that some problem may lie ahead of the person who meets Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). For example, he may fail to preserve this secret or pride and self-conceit may overtake him in such manner that he would lag behind in all goods deeds and would .start imagining that he has reached great heights

:In this regard, you may refer to

Usul-Kafi (Arabic) ۱:۳۹۰ -

Translation of Usul-Kafi, ۲:۲۳۴ -

Mehre-Mahboob: ۹۹ -

Ma'refat-e-Imam-e-Asr: ۲۲۷ -

Translation of Mekyal'ul-Makarem, ۲:۲۷۲-۲۸۷ -

t:۱۹۶

۱- In Dua-e-Abu Hamzah Thomali we read as such: "O Allah, what am I? (not who am I?) And what is my significance?! (Mafati'ul- Jinan). Also, Imam (a.s.) says, "what has .(the son of Adam to do with pride?! (Nahjul-Balagha: Maxim No ۴۴۵

QUESTION ۱۴

Is there a difference between the common man and the scholars in their meetings ?with Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.)? If so, what is the difference

:REPLY

First of all, the more the Ma'refat of a person, the more benefit he would reap. Obviously, there exists a vast difference between the request of an ordinary man and the request of a great scholar. The former seeks bread and butter while the latter (like Allamah Hilli) would request Hazrat to provide the key to his scholarly problem .and consequently open for him hundreds of doors of knowledge

Another point is that if a person has several children, he would act with each of them in a different manner. Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) treats Shaikh Hasan

t:۱۹۷

Iraqi(١) (who accompanied Hazrat for one full week) in one way and behaves with the fascinated youth who met him in Mashad in another way. He even writes letter to Shaikh Mufid and addresses him as " honourable brother ".(٢) Thus, Imam's way of behaviour depends on the visitor's state of heart; his nature of love and affection and also on the type of grace that Imam deems fit. That which is needed is purity of heart .and the one who possesses this quality possesses a great capital

The position of scholars and faqihs are intact. They have been named as Imam's "Nayeb-e-Aam " (common deputies). They are Imam's special servants. They run Imam's divine school of thought during his occultation. Besides them, there are few others too who are the servants and slaves of this kind master. They see him .everyday and are besides him. Imam too showers his special grace upon them

Thus, true divine scholars and Faqihs guard the Vilayat and religion of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). They are his sincere lovers and special servants. Naturally, their .dignity and position holds special importance as compared to the common people

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.Najme-Saqeb: ۵۰۶, Event ٩٨ -١

Ehtejaj, by Tabarsi ٢:۴٩٧ -٢

:QUESTION ۱۵

During occultation, how does Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) look into the affairs of all the people of the world? Does he recognize each and every individual? How would this be ?during his reappearance

:REPLY

This matter comprises of two aspects: One aspect is the esoteric divine deeds and capabilities of Hazrat and the other is his apparent and natural power. Each of these .should be explained separately

By virtue of his Imamate status, Imam (a.t.f.s.) is aware of the inner deeds of the people. He possesses the first and the last and the present and future knowledge by Allah's permission. He has acquaintance over all of them just as he sees the palm of his hands. About Imam, it is said he is the universal pole; the heart and focal point of

.this world and by Allah's permission, he controls the world

In a class that was run by the famous Mu'tazilite theologian Amr-ibn- Ubadi, a vital point in this regard was raised by Imam Sadiq's (a.s.) distinguished student, Hisham-ibn-Hakam. Later, while reporting to Imam Sadiq (a.s.) the matter, Imam (a.s.) -:approved his action. The gist of it is as follows

Man as a living creature possesses numerous tools in his body: His eyes function; his ears function; his tongue functions; his digestive system builds bones out of the digested food; it composes blood; it produces skin, it makes veins; it forms nerves etc etc. Thus man possesses organs and limbs. Amongst them, who is the commander-in-chief? How is the soul supreme over all the organs at one and the same time? How at one and the same time, it commands the eyes to see; the ears to listen; the tongue to talk; the brain to take photographs and so on. In the same manner, Imam (a.s.) is the heart and focal point of this universe. He is supreme over all the organs of this .universe and manages them by Allah's permission

This is Imam's divine powers. Thus, by divine power, Imam, at one and the same time, attends to hundreds of people all over the world and his help and assistance flows constantly. By virtue of his Imamate, Imam dominates over all of them by Allah's permission just as the soul and heart manages all the organs of a human body and assigns each of them some special work. He has a hand in the kingdom. By Allah's permission, he has acquaintance of the concealed things. Allah has given him the key of the unseen treasure and he has dominance

t:۲۰۰

.(over them the way he wills (verily, his will is the same as Allah's Will

:From apparent aspect

During reappearance and his manner of managing the world and attending to the people, one should look into the various dimensions of the characteristics of the ٣١٣ first hand companions of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). They are Imam's pure and obedient followers. They are reliable and trustworthy figures. They are those who have killed their carnal desires. They are not loyal to their beastly desires. They are Imam's hands and eyes. They are spread in this extensive world. They lend their ears to Imam's command and in this regard are likened to the autumnal clouds (as per hadith). Within few minutes, they shall gather together and sit besides Hazrat and receive commands from him. They shall not hesitate even a bit in fulfilling his commands. They have no will power before him just as Hazrat has no will power .before the Almighty Allah

They are the members of Imam's government. They too, in turn, would select other virtuous men to run the affairs. Thus, Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) possesses apparent sovereignty too over the entire world and has at his disposal precise information of .every nook and corner of the world and its inhabitants

As a result, in apparent terms, running the affairs of the world is linked to Imam's extensive and precise management; his power and finally his follower's sincere and .absolute obedience

t:٢٠١

It's worthy to mention that during the period of occultation too, Imam through his .agents, looks into the affairs of the people wherever and whenever he deems fit

Regarding the esoteric and apparent power of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) and his :companions, one can refer to

- Usul-Kafi ۱: Kitab al-Hujjah

- .Basa'er al-Darejaat, section concerning Imam's knowledge and power

- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۳۹۲, ۴۷۵, ۴۷۸, ۴۸۴ ۴۹۰

- .Ruzgaar-e-Reha'ee ۲: The true government

- Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) from birth to reappearance: ۵۱۲-۵۲۳

- (.Ma'refate Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s

- .Ma'refate-Mahboob

t:۲۰۲

:QUESTION ۱۶

How can one prove longevity of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) from the viewpoint of science ?and reason? Doesn’t his long life contradict the law of nature

:REPLY

Today, the matter of longevity is solved more than in the past because numerous .concealed realities and mysteries of the world have been discovered

In philosophy and logic, the matter of "Umm-ul-Ma'sael" is very famous. This matter is the base for all rational reasoning and all the rational impossibilities goes back to this very principle which says, "Rejection of union of two contradictions". In other words, two opposites cannot combine together at one time and place and in one direction. In philosophy, all the impossibilities go back to the principle of "rejection of .union of two opposites" otherwise nothing is impossible

t:۲۰۳

Now, does Imam's long life contradict the law of "Umm-ul-Ma'sael" ? Does it involve ?the union of existence and non-existence in one thing

What about experimental science? Has science fixed a limit for human age? If so, then why in the ۲۰th century, the average age has surpassed the past years? Man has succeeded in lifting the average age of human-beings. Mortality was high in the past. The death rate that ruled high in the past generation (due to lack of hygiene) has now almost vanished. Currently, man is still engaged in making medicine by which human age can be increased. From the viewpoint of experimental sciences, no limit has been .fixed for human age

Experimental science says: If someone observes the rules of hygiene and nutrition .and performs certain exercises and takes care, his life would be prolonged

Besides, it is now two centuries that most of the universities around the world are striving hard to discover some medicine for adolescence. This it is another proof that no limit has been fixed for human age However, nobody claims that the noble age of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) is normal and natural. Our claim is that his long life no way contradicts reason and science while at the same time; his long life is due to Allah's .Will

Another factor to be seen is that whether this query is raised by a Muslim or non-Muslim? If raised by a non-Muslim, then this matter is a secondary one and he should investigate into the principles and essentials. If he is a Muslim, he should refer to the holy Quran that stipulates ۹۵۰ years as only a part of prophet Nuh's (a.s.) life. This

afore-mentioned age was before the event of storm and only Allah knows how long prophet Nuh (a.s.) lived after the storm!

"..... (and so he (Nuh) remained among them a thousand years save fifty years."(۱)

As per the holy Quran, Ashab-e-Kahf (people of the cave) slept for ۳۰۰ years. Thereafter, they awoke and lived for several years.

"And they remained in their cave three hundred years and (some) add (another) nine".(۲)

Also, it is said Salman Farsi, the holy Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) famous companion lived for approximately three hundred years. He met prophet Isa's (a.s.) disciples for several generations and after examining each of them, went in search for the subsequent prophet. Each of them did introduce their respective successors until the prophethood reached the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.). He had heard that a prophet would emerge in Mecca and Medina and the period of the disciples would come to an end. (About biography of Salman Farsi, you may refer to the book, "Nafas-ur-Rahman Fi Fazael Salman" written by Muhadith Nuri and also dictionary of Dehkhoda below the word, "Salman")(۳)

t:۲۰۵

۱- Ankabut (۲۹) : ۱۴

۲- Kahf (۱۸) : ۲۵

۳- Similarly, A'yan-ul-Shia ۶:۲۷۹-۲۸۷; Seyaro A'laam-ul-Nabala ۱:۵۰۵-۵۵۸; Brief Tarikh-e-Dameshk ۱۰:۲۸-۵۶; Mu'jam Rijaal-ul-Hadith ۸:۱۸۶-۱۹۹; Sefat-ul-Safva ۱:۵۲۳-۵۵۶; Al Darejaat-ul-Rafiah: ۱۹۸-۲۲۰; Al-A'laam ۳: ۱۱۱-۱۱۲; Al-Tabaqaat-ul-Kubra ۴:۷۵-۹۳.

To sum up, from the viewpoint of reason, Imam's long life doesn’t involve any contradiction or impossibility. From the viewpoint of experimental science too, no limit has been fixed for human age. Moreover, scientists are striving hard to increase man's life span and are trying to find a medicine for adolescence. The point is that currently, it is customarily hard to imagine such a long life for Imam (a.t.f.s.). On the other hand, we do not claim too that his longevity is customary and usual. Rather, we believe this to be one of the manifestations of Divine Power and His Sunnah.

In this connection, you may refer to the following books:-

- Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), from birth to reappearance, chapter ۱۳

- Ruzgaar-e-Reha'ee ۱: ۲۳۹-۲۶۲

- Discussions about Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) chapter ۸:۱۰۷ till ۱۲۲

- Khorshid-e-Maghreb: ۱۹۱ till ۲۱۷ (chapter ۱۰)

- Al-Mahdi: ۱۳۵-۱۴۴

- Long life of Imam-e-Zaman from the viewpoint of science and religion.

- Longevity of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s).

- Alive ones of the ages.

- Longevity, indolence and prevention from old age.

t:۲۰۶

:QUESTION ۱۷

As per traditions, it is said that when Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) reappears, he would kill the enemies of Islam and Quran to such extent that blood would flow to the level of their horses' knee. On the other hand, we see reliable traditions mentioning that Hazrat would spread justice and equity and love and kindness among the people. How do we ?reconcile these two issues

:REPLY

We shall reply this query by going back still further. As per the holy Quran, the aim of prophets, messengers, divine saints and reformists is that " men conduct themselves with equity ". (Sura Hadid, verse ۲۵). They rise up to establish justice. This rising would .be widespread and universal only during Imam-e-Zaman's time and by his hands

So the ultimate aim of the Apostles and Imams is to create such an atmosphere in the entire world wherein

t:۲۰۷

all the people turn monotheists and pure Muslims and the cry: "There is no god but Allah; Muhammad is the messenger of Allah; Ali is the Wali of Allah " rings throughout the world. This is the ultimate aim. This hope and aspiration has remained unfulfilled right from the time of Hazrat Adam (a.s.) till the last prophet's (s.a.w.a.) era though all .the prophets and the last prophet did prepare its background to some extent

The Imams (a.s.) have strived on this path and the reformists, preachers, writers and poets have been active too. However, as of today, justice and monotheism (where Allah has promised that these would become universal) have not yet become widespread. The person in charge of this vital task is the twelfth Imam, Hujjat-ibn-l'Hasan (a.t.f.s.). His introduction has come down in the holy Quran and Shiite traditions as well as in numerous Sunni traditions. (the Sunnis accept the doctrine and originality of Mahdaviyat though they have not set forth some of Hazrat Mahdi's .(precise characteristics

To sum up, the ultimate aim of mankind, right from the beginning of existence is to see through Imam Mahdi's rule and government. All along, all religions, groups and .intellectuals have had hopes and aspirations in some way or the other

When Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) will rise to establish the universal government, a group will stand to oppose him out of ungratefulness and egoism and will create obstacles on his path. What is the remedy? What does reason command? Should this human hope and aspiration remain unfulfilled and instead turn into despair just for the

sake of these few individuals!? Its here that defense and war (but after finalization of .argument and call for peace) becomes necessary so that Hazrat can easily rule

For achieving this aim, he has no alternative but to wage war. But it isn't true that right from the beginning of this advent, he would start killing his opponents with the sword. For long, he will call the people towards Islam and Quran. The period of stability of his government would take a long time. By period of stability, we mean the period during which Hazrat would acquaint the people. The first sentence that he :would utter is

بقيهٍ الله خيرٍ لكم ان كنتم مؤمنين و انا بقيهٍ الله

Such a kind invitation shows that like his great grandfather, he too is an ocean of kindness and mercy. After he presents the true Islam to all nations and tribes and completes the argument for them, he will inevitably draw his sword against the stubborn enemies. This is because stability of Imam's government is Allah's indispensable Will and so, after finalizing the argument, he must inevitably fight .against the enemies of monotheism and justice

Actually, I have not yet come across any tradition pinpointed at the beginning of this .query and nor did I find any by a short glance

On the other hand, it has come down in numerous traditions that Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) is victorious by the fear and is assisted and confirmed (by Allah). (۱) (fear would overtake all the governments and his government

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.Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۲۹۲, hadith ۱ -۱

would be assisted by Allah). By reflecting over the traditions, any sound mind and pure heart will accept that defense and war is inevitable.

Thirdly, we can say that such type of traditions is applicable to the period just before Imam's reappearance because it has come down in certain traditions that just before his reappearance, several wars would take place and numerous people in the world would get killed.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said, " Before the rising of the "Qaem", there would be two deaths: The red death and the white death such that five out of seven would perish. The red death is the death by sword (war) and the white death is plague."(۱)

Consequently, if its war and destruction of human-beings, it would occur before reappearance. This too is a sign of reappearance but capable of divine alteration.

Hazrat would rise with the sword of his grandfather, the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and after inviting the people he would fight with a few who wish to stand against the truth.

Regarding this topic as well as the manner of reappearance and his rising with the sword, you may refer to the following books:

- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۳۰۲, ۴۲۱, ۴۲۴, ۴۸۰ ۴۸۱

- Ghaibat-e-Nu'mani: ۲۴۷, ۲۸۳, ۲۹۶, ۲۹۹ ۳۱۱

- Al-Mahdi: ۱۹۱, ۲۱۷ ۲۲۱

- Muntahi-ul-A'maal: ۲:۸۷۳

t:۲۱۰

۱- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۴۴۱, hadith ۷.

- ۱۹ and ۱۸ chapters) ۱۹۹۸ ۲:۸۸۹ Ruzgaar-e-Reha'ee)

- Salvation.

t:۲۱۱

:QUESTION ۱۸

:About Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), we read in Dua-e-Nudba that

أين المضطرُّ الذى يُجابُ إذا دَعا؟

WHERE IS THE DISTRESSED ONE, WHOSE PRAYER IS ANSWERED BY ALLAH"? HAS" ALLAH PROMISED THAT HE WOULD RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THE ONE WHO PRAYS? ABOUT HIS PROPHET (S.A.W.A.), ALLAH SAYS, "ASK FORGIVENESS FOR THEM OR DO NOT ASK FORGIVENESS FOR THEM; EVEN IF YOU ASK FORGIVENESS (FOR THEM SEVENTY TIMES, ALLAH WILL NOT FORGIVE THEM".(۱)

So how can we say that Imam-e-Zaman's prayers (dua) are definitely answered? ?Why is he called the distressed one? Why doesn’t he pray for his distressed state

t:۲۱۳

Tauba (۹): ۸۰ -۱

:REPLY

In certain instances in the holy Quran, the Almighty Allah has guaranteed to answer .the prayers of His creatures

:For instance, in Sura Mu'min (Ghafer), verse ۶۰ says

."And your Lord says: Call upon Me, I will answer you"

:Also, in Sura Hud, verse ۳ says

And you that ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him; He will provide you with" "....a goodly provision

:Another specimen can be found in Sura Naml verse ۶۲

أمَّن يُجيبُ المُضطرَّ إذا دَعاهُ و يكشفُ السُّوءَ؟

"?Or, Who answers the distressed one when he calls upon Him and removes the evil"

This noble verse says: "The prayer of the distressed one (whosoever he or she may be) is answered by Allah) and this is itself Allah's promise to a special group. For this very reason, at times of difficulties, the Shiites often recite this verse very desperately and plead before Allah to remove their distress (mainly the occultation of Imam). Besides, according to traditions, " Muztarr " (the distressed) refers to Imam-e-Zaman .(.(a.t.f.s

t:۲۱۴

:Imam Baqir (a.s.) says

I swear by Allah that he (Qaem Aale-Muhammad) is the "Muztarr" referred to in" Allah's Book that says, Who answers the distressed one when he calls upon Him and (removes the evil." (١

:Imam Sadiq (a.s.) too said

This verse is revealed about our Qaem. By Allah, he will recite two unit prayers at" Ibrahim's station (Allah's House) and will pray and call Allah. He (Allah) shall answer his (prayers and remove the evil from him and will make him successor on the earth." (٢

Respected readers should refer to the book " Naamhe-Mahboob " (saying No ۴, page .(٨٧-١١٣) and " Najm-e-Saqeb" (section concerning Imam-e-Zaman's names and titles

Thus, the claim that Allah has not promised to positively answer the prayers is .disregarded by virtue of the verses of Quran

Also, that which was said about the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that his forgiveness for certain individuals is of no use, it is worthy to note that about the holy Prophet :(s.a.w.a.), the following verse has been revealed

AND HAD THEY, WHEN THEY WERE UNJUST TO THEMSELVES, COME TO YOU AND" ASKED FORGIVENESS OF ALLAH AND THE APOSTLE HAD (ALSO) ASKED FOR

t:٢١۵

Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵٢:٣۴١ -١

Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵١:۴٨ -٢

FORGIVENESS FOR THEM, THEY WOULD HAVE FOUND ALLAH OFT-RETURNING (TO (MERCY), MERCIFUL."(۱)

Besides, it has come down in numerous traditions that prayers of parents for their children, prayers of the oppressed in favour of their helpers etc etc are answered.

Regarding the verse that says, " O Prophet, whether you ask forgiveness for them or not, Allah will not forgive them", it refers to the hypocrites who because of their hypocrisy, even the prophet is not allowed to seek forgiveness for them. This only lays stress on Allah's Wrath upon them and has no relation with the Prophet's prayers that are answered.

Imam-e-Zaman's prayers for others would be answered.

The reason he is called " Muztarr " (distressed one) is because of the distress and hardships arising from Ghaibat (occultation) which is also the result of people's sins. By Divine Wisdom, he is concealed and would reappear one day. Thus, Hazrat himself is supposed to pray for his faraj . Anyhow, his reappearance is in Allah's Hands and whenever He Wills, that particular prayer too would be answered as it has come down in traditions that in one of the instances when Hazrat would be standing besides the Ka'ba reciting the verse, "Who answers the distressed one when he calls upon Him and removes the evil?" suddenly, the divine command for his reappearance would be issued.(۲)

t:۲۱۶

۱- Nisa (۴) : ۶۴

۲- Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۱:۴۸, hadith ۱۱

:QUESTION ۱۹

Is this saying correct that Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) would reappear until so and so year and most of the signs of his reappearance have already been fulfilled and the ?ground is prepared for his coming

:REPLY

About the signs of reappearance and the fact that most of the signs have already occurred and only a few remain to take effect, we have explained them while replying to other queries and stressed that the signs of reappearance are only a groundwork and not the absolute reason for reappearance. Occurrence of these signs does not make certain the matter of reappearance. Traditions on ba'da testify that the signs of reappearance are all worthy of change and that which is indispensable is the very essence of reappearance of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). One matter in which Imam -:Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) bears resemblance to Hazrat Yusuf (a.s.) is the following

t:۲۱۷

يصلح الله آمره فی لیلهَ

(Allah would correct the task of his reappearance ('zuhoor') in a night's time."(۱)"

:Besides, numerous traditions say that

" كَذِب الوقّاتُونَ كَذِبَ الوَقّاتون كَذبَ الوقّاتُون!"

"Those who fix the time of reappearance are liars and have uttered lies"

Also, Imam's reappearance is likened to the setting up of the judgement day. Just as the time of judgement day is unclear similarly, the time of Imam's reappearance too .is not known to anyone

Moreover, the immaculate Imams (a.s.) have stressed that no time has been fixed for .reappearance and faraj and so, we too cannot fix any time

From the traditions we understand that the Almighty Allah hasn't fixed or decreed the time of reappearance. Its knowledge is only with Allah and He has not conveyed this even to the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Imams (a.s.). Thus, if someone says that Hazrat would reappear during such and such year, it would imply that until that year, Hazrat would certainly not reappear. This it is an open lie and against the aforesaid traditions :because our traditions teach us that

" تَوَقَّع أمرَ صاحبکَ لیلکَ و نَهارك "

t:۲۱۸

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۳۰۰, hadith ۳ -۱

"Await the reappearance of your master every day and night." (1)

Another result that would arise by fixing time of reappearance is that its occurrence later than the fixed time is impossible. This too has been rejected by traditions.

Therefore, those who fix the time of reappearance are liars because he will reappear whenever Allah wishes.

اللهم عجل فرجه و سهل مخرجه

About this topic, you may refer to the following books:

- Mauoode-Ruzgaaraan
- Dar-Entezare Imam
- Aafaqh-e-Entezar
- Entezar, Bazre-Enqelab
- Dar-Fajre Sahel, section concerning poem of Entezar
- Khorshid-e-Maghreb, section concerning Entezar.
- Kafi ۱:۳۶۸
- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۴۶۳
- Imamate and Mahdaviyat, section on Entezar.

t:۲۱۹

۱- Bihar-ul-Anwar ۹۸:۱۵۹

:QUESTION ۲۰

What does it imply when we say that the earth will be filled with tyranny before Imam's reappearance? Is it that there wouldn't be any justice left? Will the common people too ill-treat and oppress one another? Is the claim made by western countries ?that the rule of justice prevails in their countries true and correct

:REPLY

:Two points would pave the way for replying this query

Firstly, in certain instances, "filled" is a relative matter and in few cases an absolute matter. When we say, "the pool is filled with water" it implies that "filling" is used in the true and absolute sense and may even denote that water is overflowing from it. However, in the sentence, "the hall is filled with people", the term "filled" is used in the relative sense because only the floor and

t:۲۲۱

seats are filled. But a few empty seats here and there wouldn't contradict this sentence and besides, the space till the ceiling is empty too. Thus the sentence, "the hall is filled with people" is quite different from the sentence, "the pool is filled with ".water

That the earth is filled with cruelty and tyranny conveys a relative and common meaning. Of course, tyranny can be seen in all the human societies and though all the societies are morally disintegrating, yet, in the midst of all such tyranny, goodness and .justice can still be found

Secondly, from the view of the holy Quran and Islamic terminology, injustice and tyranny is not restricted to social injustice and tyranny of the rulers. Instead, any sin and opposition to the divine commands and prohibitions is considered as injustice. :One of the terms most used in the holy Quran is the word, "unjust to self" like

ربنا ظلمنا انفسنا

(OUR LORD! WE HAVE BEEN UNJUST TO OURSELVES."(۱"

Or

و لو انهم اذ ظلموا أنفسهم جاءوک فاستغفروا الله.......

AND HAD THEY, WHEN THEY WERE UNJUST TO THEMSELVES, COME TO YOU AND" (ASKED FORGIVENESS OF ALLAH......................."(۲

t:۲۲۲

۱- Araf (۷) : ۲۳

۲- Nisa (۴) : ۶۴

:Also, the holy Quran interprets polytheism as a major offence

يا بنى لا تشرک باالله! ان الشرک لظلم عظیم

LUQMAN SAYS): "O MY SON! DO NOT ASSOCIATE AUGHT WITH ALLAH; MOST)" (SURELY POLYTHEISM IS A GRAVE INIQUITY."(۱)

Consequently, the sentence, "the earth will be filled with injustice" implies that the earth will be filled with sin and corruption individually and collectively. This would open .up the way for social tyranny by the hands of oppressive rulers

The talk that the westerners reckon their countries to be filled with justice due to implementation of their social laws is nothing but exaggeration. Firstly, individual crimes and moral degradation is rampant in these countries. Secondly, drug addiction, spiritual sickness and people reaching dead end in such countries is increasing day by day. Isn't the unlimited financial transgression and individual violence in the west the sign of injustice? Where and in which country can we find security and complete peace? Can we label the collective transgression, colonial rule and exploitation by countries for personal gains as justice? Is conquer of the Islamic potentialities as well ?as third world countries justice

If at all the apparent rules prevail in the west it is due to their success in exploiting other countries and

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Luqman (۳۱) : ۱۳ -۱

attracting their money and manpower for themselves. Otherwise, not only true justice is absent in these countries, but there remains truth-seeking people who are .still thirsty of justice and long for an ideal society

:For more information about western societies, you may refer to

.Chaos in the modern world -

.The world in ۲۰th century -

:QUESTION ۲۱

What do we mean by saying that Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) would invite the people towards their own respective books and beliefs? Wouldn't he invite the people to ?Islam and Quran

:REPLY

Hazrat Qaem Aale-Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) will invite all nations towards their own respective books. To the Jews, he would say, "In the Torah, it has come down about my reappearance as such." To the Christians, he would say, "In the Bible, my rule has been introduced in such and such manner." To the Zoroastrians, the Hindus and all the people of other religions, he would argue and reason out by referring to their .books and thus prove the rightfulness of Islam and his Imamate and rule

:In a tradition, it has come down as follows

Verily, the Mahdi will bring out the coffin of the Ark of the Covenant from the cave of" ,Entakia and draw out the Pentateuch from a mountain in Syria. With them

t:۲۲۴

he would argue and reason out with the Jews and majority of them would bring faith (in Islam."(1)

In this manner, the argument shall be finalized for the followers of all divine religions and human schools of thought and everyone would gather under the banner of monotheism, Islam and Quran with one belief. At this time, Quran would be the divine book and Islam would be the religion.

Hazrat Baqiyat'ul-allah (a.t.f.s.) would teach this heavenly religion to the people and interpret the book of Allah for them. The people would continue to live with hearts and tongues united under one rule and leader.

In this regard, you may refer to the following books:

- Usul-Kafi ۱: ۲۲۴, hadith ۳-۶ and page ۲۲۷, hadith ۱ ۲.

- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۳۰۹, hadith ۱-۵ and ۳۱۲, hadith ۱-۵

- Khorshid-e-Maghreb: ۳۳۵ chapter ۱۴

About coffin and Antakia, you may refer to:

- Persian dictionary.

- Qamoos (dictionary) on holy book.

t:۲۲۵

۱- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۳۰۹, hadith ۴; Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۱:۲۹ and ۵۲:۳۵۰

:QUESTION ٢٢

Will Fiqhahat and Ijtihad that is practiced in our time continue to prevail during ?Hazrat's time or would they vanish completely

:REPLY

:In reply to this query, we shall analyze some points

Firstly, we should know why Fiqhahat and Ijtihad came into practice? The term "Ijtihad" has been taken by the Shiites from the Sunnis otherwise in the Shiite culture, ." the term "Tafaqquh" is used instead of "Ijtihad

During Hazrat's era, Fiqhahat would not be as prevalent as it is today and its level .would thus differ

Ghaibat (absence) of our immaculate Imams (a.s.) has given entry to Fiqhahat and Ijtihad. As Imams (a.s.) are not present amongst all the people, the door of

t:٢٢٧

Fiqhahat is opened for implementing the divine ordinances. This is because the honourable Faqihs measure the diverse traditions, remove any contradictions if any and deduce the necessary decree. For this reason, from the viewpoint of the Shiite .Fiqh , the ahkam (decrees) of Faqihs are exoteric

It should be known that during occultation, the door of knowledge and certainty for attaining real ahkam (ordinances) is closed and the people practice the exoteric ahkam (decrees) only. However, during Hazrat's era, due to direct contact with him and widespread communication means, the uncertainties in ahkam would not be like in the past and the ahkam would be the divine and real akham . Imam himself shall say, "Such is the decree of so and so matter". His words (that are hadith and vahy) would be heard and practiced by all and " taqiyya h" (dissimulation) would cease to .exist during his time

This hasn't been the case before reappearance. The Faqihs have been in charge of explaining the ordinances based on their inference from the Usul (principles). Thus, during Imam's era, there wouldn't be any more need for such fiqhahat and inference. Instead, there would exist certain phases of fiqhahat and inference but different from the past. For instance, Imam's representatives and their successors would explain to the people the ahkam . Of course, a tenderly type fiqhahat and inference would exist at that time too but not as extensive as our time because in every nook and corner of the world, detailed explanation of ample decrees depends on a Faqih's inference and .his acquaintance with the subject

t:۲۲۸

About fiqh and fiqhahat and its origin and history, you may refer to the following :books

- Periods of Fiqh

- .Utterances on Fiqh

- "Persian Da'ertul-Ma'aref, "fiqh

t:۲۲۹

:QUESTION ۲۳

In traditions, Hazrat Mahdi's (a.t.f.s.) government is likened to Hazrat Dawood's (a.s.) ?government. From what viewpoint, their governments resemble one another

:REPLY

As per the holy Quran, one of the exclusivenesses earmarked for Hazrat Dawood :(a.s.) was that he was made the ruler by Almighty Allah

انا جعلناک خلیفه فی الارض فاحکم بین الناس بالحق

O DAWOOD! SURELY WE HAVE MADE YOU A RULER IN THE LAND; SO JUDGE " (BETWEEN MEN WITH JUSTICE."(۱

Hazrat Dawood was the first one in history who ruled esoterically in matters of litigations and disputes. In

t:۲۳۱

Suad (۳۸) : ۲۶ -۱

other words, whenever disputes took place between two people, they would be taken before Hazrat Dawood (a.s.) who would solve the problem by virtue of his divine knowledge (i.e., based on his knowledge of the hidden and concealed realities).

Such was not the case during the time of holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the Imams (a.s.). They would judge exoterically (apparently). But, at the time of Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) reappearance, people would approach him with their disputes and claims and he would solve them very simply.

It should be known that such type of judgment destroys any type of violations and transgressions (which is witnessed today amongst majority of the people) because; everyone realizes that nobody can nullify the truth with the help of feigning and excuses. In other words, they fully realize that the judge is supposed to judge esoterically and his judgment is based on divine knowledge and Hazrat would act by this divine knowledge.

The similarity of Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) government with Hazrat Dawood's (a.s.) government lies in this that Imam (a.t.f.s.) would judge esoterically without calling for any witness or evidence.(۱)

Regarding this topic, you may refer to the following books:-

- Imam Mahdi from birth to reappearance: ۶۰۶-۶۱۱

- Muntakhab-ul-Athar (Arabic): ۳۰۹

t:۲۳۲

۱- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۳۰۸, hadith ۱.

- Ruzgaar-e-Reha'ee ۲:۶۴۴-۶۴۸

- Al-Mahdi (Arabic): ۸۴

- Kamaale-hasti-Dar-Asr'e-Zuhoor : ۱۳۵

- Khorshid-Maghreb: ۳۵

- Bihar-ul-Anwar (Arabic) ۳۶:۳۰۳

t:۲۳۳

:QUESTION ۲۴

What difference does Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) have with other prophets and Imams such that amongst all the prophets and Imams it is only Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) who can fulfill Allah's Will and meet the peoples hope? Is it that the other prophets and Imams couldn't fulfill this aim? Will Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) compel the people to "? accept his rule? Doesn't the holy verse say, " There is no compulsion in religion

:REPLY

In reality, the question is that why the other Imams (a.s.) did not implement this universal plan which would be put into action by Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) only? Also, considering that there is no compulsion in religion, how Imam (a.t.f.s.) would force ?people to accept his plans

The first part itself comprises two points: Firstly, the Almighty Allah has not wished so. Secondly, the people before Hazrat Mahdi's (a.t.f.s.) rule weren't

t:۲۳۵

prepared for implementation of such plan. Thus during Amir-ul-Mu'mineen's (a.s.) rule too, the Islamic plans could not be implemented in full. The people couldn't tolerate Imam Ali's rule. They even failed to accept Imam Hasan's government otherwise Imam Hasan (a.s.) would never have entered into peace treaty with Muwaiya. The people invited Imam Husain (a.s.). Thereafter, they changed the political situation so fast that they closed Imam Husain's path at Karbala. Before, Imam Husain (a.s.) had sent Muslim-ibn-Aqeel and people swore allegiance to him. Later, they abandoned him such that only a few remained in the Kufa mosque. At night, they did not give .Muslim any shelter and left him all alone

Thus, all the invitations and movements were all a show and weren't based on their recognition of Imam. For this reason, with one political move, the enemies turned the .situation ۱۸۰ degrees against Muslim-ibn-Aqeel

During Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) rule, all groups would come to Imam's assistance and would approve his rule. This is because all the governments would come to this conclusion that they are incapable of ruling the world. Thus, they would have full preparedness in accepting Imam-e-Zaman's rule and would accept so whole .heartedly

Besides, if Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) rule extends all over the land, it doesn't contradict in any way the verse, " there is no compulsion in religion ." This is because it is Allah's Will and the desire of the common people to see the universal government set in motion. However, only a limited number (who would refuse to accept the truth) would wish to raise the banner of opposition and perhaps

".say, "We wish to put up our own tribal and religious organization

:The entire citizens around the world would say

آشهد آن لا اله الا الله و آشهد ان محمدا رسول الله و آشهد آن عليا ولی الله

?Is it possible to cancel the universal plans just for the sake of a limited few

About Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) rule, its worthy to mention that unlike his judgments in litigations and disputes where he would judge esoterically, he is not charged to rule esoterically. His divine and unseen knowledge has nothing to do with his ruling and .acceptance of government and he would act exoterically

Thus, the society at that time would be a Muslim society and the government an Islamic government. The slogans would be Islamic slogans. No place would be found wherein a non-Muslim would reside. No individual would be found by the name of Jew, Christian, Zorastrian Buddha, Brahmin etc. All the people would submit themselves before the truth and would say, "La-Illaha-Ilallah" though their inner freedom and .authority would remain intact

To sum up, the Will of the All-Wise Allah and the people's preparedness during the end of time makes it expedient for only Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) to shoulder this enormous duty of forming the universal government and this is the same about which .all prophets and Imams have given glad tidings

t:۲۳۷

:The holy Quran says

Is it then other than Allah's religion that they seek (to follow), and to Him submits" whoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and to Him shall they (be returned."(۱

:Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said

When our Qaem shall emerge no place would remain void of the cry, 'I bear witness" that there is no god but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is Allah's messenger ('."(۲

:About this subject, you may refer to the following books

- Al-Muhajjah (Arabic) : ۵۱, ۸۵, ۱۰۸, ۱۳۰, ۱۴۱ ۱۵۵

- Seemaye-Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) Dar Quran: ۹۵, ۱۳۸, ۱۵۰, ۱۶۸, ۱۹۱, ۲۳۱, ۲۵۰ ۲۵۴

- (Khorshid-e-Maghreb: ۱۱۴-۱۲۲ (chapter ۷) and ۸۹-۱۰۰ (chapter ۶

- Al-Mahdi (Arabic): ۲۵-۳۲

- Dar Fajre-Sahel: ۳۱-۱۳۱

- Qiyam-e-Jaavdaneh: ۱۳۸-۱۵۴

t:۲۳۸

۱- Aale-Imran (۳) : ۸۳

۲- Al-Muhajjah: ۵۰

:QUESTION ۲۵

As per some traditions, Hazrat Isa (a.s.) too would accompany Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) during the latter's reappearance. Would the Christians bring faith in Imam ?Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and turn Muslims or would they rebel against him

:REPLY

First of all, from the viewpoint of the holy Quran and authentic Shiite traditions, Hazrat Isa (a.s.) is not dead and wasn't crucified at all. He is alive and the Christians of that :time were led into error about him while Allah took him up to Himself

و ما قتلوه و ما صلبوه و لكن شبه لهم....بل رفعه الله اليه

AND THEY DID NOT KILL HIM NOR DID THEY CRUCIFY HIM, BUT IT APPEARED TO" (THEM SO.........NAY! ALLAH TOOK HIM UP TO HIMSELF."(۱

t:۲۳۹

Nisa (۴) : ۱۵۷-۱۵۸ -۱

In the Shiite traditions it has come down that he lives in the fourth heaven. What is the .fourth heaven? It isn't very clear

Secondly, according to the context of numerous Shiite and Sunni traditions, Hazrat Isa (a.s.) is Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) vizier (minister). This messenger of Allah would (follow Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) and pray behind him.(١

Thirdly, right from the time of the holy Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) appointment, Hazrat Isa (a.s.) acts upon Islam, the holy Quran and the way of the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) [assuming that Hazrat Isa (a.s.) is still responsible in performing the religious obligations]. The fact that he shoulders Imam Mahdi's (a.t.f.s.) ministry supports this .matter as well

Fourthly, the Christians too are like other nations and majority of them would positively respond to the call of monotheism and justice given by the promised .saviour. Like few others, few amongst them would show resistance

Based on traditions, the interpreters have interpreted verse ١٥٩ from Sura Nisa ("And there is not one of the followers of the Book but most certainly believes in this before :his death") as follows

Before the resurrection day (at the time of rising of Imam Mahdi), Hazrat Isa would descend and no Christian

t:٢۴٠

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ٣١۶-٣١٧, hadith ١-٨ -١

(or Jew would remain but that they would bring faith in him.(۱)

Therefore, as per this interpretation and some traditions, the people of the Book would all bring faith in him during the end of time and Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) rule.

About this topic, please refer to the following books:

- ۱۴ chapter) Ruzgaar-e-Reha'ee ۲:۵۹۱)

- Seemaye-Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) Dar Quran: ۱۱۴-۱۱۵

- The reappearance of saviour as per narration of Christianity and Islam.

- Khorshid-e-Maghreb: ۵۷-۵۸ and ۹۶-۱۰۰

- Mauoode-Ruzgaaraan.

- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۲۴۷, ۲۹۰, ۲۹۲, ۲۹۸, ۳۰۴ ۳۰۸

t:۲۴۱

۱- Kanz-ul-Daqa'eq ۲:۶۷۹

:QUESTION ۲۶

Based on verses ۱۴ and ۶۴ from Sura Maeda, considering that polytheism and blasphemy would remain until the day of resurrection, would the land become free ?from polytheism and blasphemy during Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) rule

:REPLY

-:The two afore-mentioned verses say

"و من الـذین قـالوا: انـا نصاری آخـذنا میثاقهم فنسوا حظا مما ذکروا به فآغرینا بینهم العـداوه و البغضاه الی یول القیامه و سوف ینبئهم الله بما کانوا یصنعون"

"و قـالت الیهود: یـد الله مغلولهُ! غُلّت أیـدیهم و لُعنُوا بمـا قالوا بل یـداهُ مبسُوطتان یُنفقُ کیفَ یشاءُ و لیزیـدنَّ کثیراً منهم ما أُنزل إلیك من ربّكَ طُغیاناً و کُفراً. و ألقینا بینهُم العـداوهَ و البغضاءَ إلی یوم القیامه کُلّما أوقـدُوا ناراً للحرب أطفأها اللهُ و یسـعون فی الأرض فساداً و اللهُ لا یُحبُّ المُفسدین"

t:۲۴۳

And with those who say, We are Christians, We made a covenant, but they neglected" a portion of what they were reminded of, therefore We excited among them enmity ".and hatred to the day of resurrection; and Allah will inform them of what they did

And the Jews say: The hand of Allah is tied up! Their hands shall be shackled and they" shall be cursed for what they say. Nay, both His hands are spread out. He expends as He pleases; and what has been revealed to you from your Lord will certainly make many of them increase in inordinacy and unbelief; and We have put enmity and hatred among them till the day of resurrection; whenever they kindle a fire for war Allah puts it out, and they strive to make mischief in the land; and Allah does not love ".the mischief makers

among them) in both the verses? Also) "بینهم" We should see who is referred to as amongst which group is enmity, anger and hatred and what is meant by 'till the day of ?'resurrection

In our daily conversation, we say, 'Our friendship will last till the day of resurrection'. :(.In Ziarat-e-Ashura, we say to Imam Husain (a.s

علیک منی سلام الله آبدا ما بقیتٍ و بقی اللیل و النهار

."Peace be upon you from my side until the day of resurrection"

t:۲۴۴

As if I am alive till the day of resurrection!? Certainly not. But the contents of this sentence only wish to express that this friendship is so deep, profound and steadfast .that if at all we continue to live together, it would last till the day of resurrection

These two verses say: Enmity and hatred is so deep among them that if they ever live till the day of resurrection, such enmity would continue to persist in them. This part of we put)) "آلقینا" verse ۱۴ is exactly the same as that of verse ۶۴ except that instead of .we excited) is used) "آغرینا" the term

Another point is that during Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) reappearance, man would not give away his free-will and its possible that his carnal desires as well as Satan would tempt him to evil. But the society would be a just and pious Islamic society just as the Quran has given glad tiding about it and everyone would be a monotheist. The holy :Quran says

وعد الله الذین آمنوا منکم و عملُوا الصّالحات لیستخلفنَّهُم فی الأرض کما استخلف الذین من قبلهم و لیُمکِّننَّ لهُم دینهُم الذی ارتضی لهم و لیُبدِّلنَّهُم من بعد خوفهم أمناً یعبُدُوننی لا یُشرکُون بی شیأً

ALLAH HAS PROMISED TO THOSE OF YOU WHO BELIEVE AND DO GOOD THAT HE " WILL MOST CERTAINLY MAKE THEM RULERS IN THE EARTH AS HE MADE RULERS THOSE BEFORE THEM, AND THAT HE WILL MOST CERTAINLY ESTABLISH FOR THEM THEIR RELIGION WHICH HE HAS CHOSEN FOR THEM, AND THAT HE WILL MOST

CERTAINLY, AFTER THEIR FEAR, GIVE THEM SECURITY IN EXCHANGE; THEY SHALL (SEVER ME, NOT ASSOCIATING AUGHT WITH ME."(۱)

The promise given is that fear would be taken away from the people; the earth would be at the disposal of the oppressed ones; good actions would take place and people would worship Allah and not associate anyone with Him.

In another verse, we read:

و لقد کتبنا فی ازبور من بعد الذکر آن الارض یرثها عبادی الصالحون

" AND CERTAINLY WE WROTE IN THE BOOK AFTER THE REMINDER THAT (AS FOR) THE LAND, MY RIGHTEOUS SERVANTS SHALL INHERIT IT."(۲)

It is recorded in the Zaboor after the Torah that the righteous servants would inherit the land. So during Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) rule, the land would belong to the righteous ones and the end is for the pious ones.

و العاقبه للمتقین

"AND THE END IS FOR THOSE WHO GUARD (AGAINST EVIL)."(۳)

و نرید آن نمن علی الذین استضعفوا قی الارض و نجعلهم آئمه و نجعلهم الوارثین

t:۲۴۶

۱- Nur (۲۴) : ۵۵

۲- Anbiya (۲۱) : ۱۰۵

۳- Araf (۷) : ۱۲۸; Qasas (۲۸) : ۸۳.

AND WE DESIRED TO BESTOW A FAVOUR UPON THOSE WHO WERE DEEMED WEAK " (IN THE LAND, AND TO MAKE THEM THE IMAMS, AND TO MAKE THEM THE HEIRS."(١

The weak would become Imams and heirs. They are the believers and people of good deeds. Their goodness will leave its effects on others too, willy-nilly.

These were the verses from the Quran clearly specifying that the people will worship Allah and would not associate aught with Him.

In the traditions it has come down that no place would remain void of the cry, 'I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is Allah's messenger '. This matter has been noted down by the Sunni scholars too. In spite of all this, personal jealousy and spite might remain in individuals as after all, we are human-beings possessing freedom and authority as well as desires. But its clear that their number is very limited and the majority would be trained by Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.).

To sum up, the face of the human society would turn pure and remain free from filth, blasphemy, polytheism, injustice and tyranny; all this due to the blessings of divine government and leadership of an immaculate figure. From the other side, the human-beings would not be devoid of free will. Rather, they would use

t:۲۴۷

۱- Qasas (۲۸) : ۵

their free will either in the right or wrong way: "اما شاكرا و اما كفورا"

In this connection, you may refer to the following:

- Seemaye-Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) Dar Quran
- Ruzgaar-e-Reha'ee, section ۱۲.
- Imamate Wa Mahdaviyat, Vol ۲, liberated belief.
- Imamate Wa Mahdaviyat, Vol ۳, In the direction of a noble government.
- Imamate Wa Mahdaviyat, Vol ۳, Glad tidings of peace and security.
- Khorshid-Maghreb, page ۳۲۲-۳۲۳
- Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۱: ۴۴-۶۴

t:۲۴۸

:QUESTION ۲۷

We know that Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) satisfaction and happiness with respect to ourselves lies in our true and correct belief (creed) and virtuous deeds. How and by ?what means can one achieve this momentous issue

:REPLY

Right from the past till today, reason together with experience has confirmed the issue of expertise. History talks about expertise in arts and science. The spread and expansion of sciences, arts and know-how is all the result of expertise and specialty in diverse branches. Reason too guides us to accept this fact that we must refer to the focal point of science and knowledge. Obviously, in acquiring knowledge on religion, .one must return to the real focal point and fountainhead

t:۲۴۹

In this connection, the real pivot is the Quran and Ahl ul-bayt (a.s.) [who also possesses the knowledge of Quran]. It's necessary to acquire all the sciences and learn the creeds, ethics and precepts from them. Aside from numerous reliable and widely transmitted traditions from them, they have explained and interpreted the fundamentals and principles that have been complied and explained in several books :like

(.Nahjul-Balagha: Sermons, maxims and letters of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen (a.s

(.Sahifa-Sajjadia: Invocations and prayers by Imam Sajjad (a.s

.Usul, Furu and Rauzah Kafi: written by Seqat'ul Islam Kulaini

.Faqiho-La-Ya'zural-Faqih: written by Seqat'ul Islam Shaikh Saduq

.Al-Estibsar: written by Shaikh-ul-Ta'efa Abu Jafar Tusi

.Al-Tahzeeb: written by Shaikh-ul-Ta'efa Abu Jafar Tusi

.Tafsir by Ali-ibn-Ibrahim Qommi

.Tafsir by Muhammad-ibn-Masoud Aiyashi Samarqandi

.Tafsir by Furaat-ibn-Ibrahim-ibn-Furaat Kufi

Basa'er al-Darejaat, by Muhammad-ibn-Hasan-ibn-Farrokh Saffar and tens of other .books on hadith and tafsir

.Thus, in matters of Usul and Furu as well as ethics one must refer to these books

About the matter that we should seek knowledge from them, Imam Baqir (a.s.) says Then let man look to his food": Sura Abasa:۲۴):") "فلينظر الانسان الى طعامه " :about the verse ""So its necessary that man looks to his food

t:۲۵۰

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) too said, "It means man should look at his knowledge and see from whom he is acquiring it?"(١)

Knowledge and understanding is the main spiritual food which must be nourished from its main source.

About the fact that we must refer to the Imams (a.s.) and the narrators of their traditions, we quote Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) as saying:(٢)

أمّا الحوادثُ الواقعهُ فارجعوا فيها الى رُواه أحاديثنا

"During occurrence of events, refer to the narrators of our hadith (and acquire your knowledge from them that is supplied from the limpid fountainhead of Ahl'ul-bayt)."

In this connection, refer to Usul-e-Kafi, Kitab-ul-Hujjah.

Besides, our inner reasoning and innate intellect dictates that in gratitude for the All-Beneficent and as a form of servitude, we must believe and remain steadfast about Oneness of Allah, the need for a prophet, the presence of the Day of Judgment, reckoning and divine justice and the existence of guardians of religion i.e., Imamate and Vilayat.

Knowledge and sciences (that originates from fitrat) must be acquired from its focal point and fountainhead. That which lifts the curtain from the fitrat is the holy verses of Quran and the explanation given by its

t:٢٥١

١- Kafi ١:۴٩, hadith ٨

٢- Ehtejaj: ۴٧٠

interpreters. Numerous verses guide us to these scholars and the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) has determined and introduced them. He has given them the knowledge of .the Quran and commanded the people to follow them

Consequently, about the exposition and explanation of innate creed, the words and sayings of the immaculate leaders are hujjat (divine proof). They are reliable leaders in matters of fiqh and ethics too and the more closer a faqih or narrator is to them the .more is his reliability

To sum up, the Book and the Sunnah, in their true interpreted forms, are the best and the worthiest source for acquiring the genuine Islamic doctrines and their carriers .(immaculate ones) are the most reliable ones for presenting and explaining them

-:In this regard, you may refer to the following books

.Usul-e-Kafi ۱:۱۶۸-۱۷۴, ۲۶۵-۲۶۸, ۳۹۰ and ۳۹۸-۳۹۹ -

Ma'refate Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) ۲۲۱-۲۳۰ -

Wasa'el al-Shia ۱۸:۲-۱۵۲, chapter concerning necessity of referring to the knowledge - (.of Imams (a.s

Imamate and Mahdaviyat Vol ۱, The order of Imamate and leadership: ۶۳-۷۰ -

Imamate and Mahdaviyat Vol ۳, Glad tidings about security and peace: ۴۳-۶۲ -

t:۲۵۲

:QUESTION ۲۸

The more a person becomes familiar with Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) the more he desires to acquire his Imam's satisfaction. What should we do to attract our Imam's ?satisfaction more and more

:REPLY

This query arises more for the youths because the key for gaining proximity to Allah and perfection of faith lies in Imam's satisfaction. All are aware that what deeds .(.pleases Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s

He is pleased with us Shiites if we act as true Shiites. The concept of Shia is summarized as true beliefs and deeds. The true spirit of these two also is love for Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). Literally, Shia means follower. The requisite for following Imam is to pursue his path. So love for Imam is the main source for attracting his .satisfaction

t:۲۵۳

True creed and true deeds too cannot be acquired except from his prolific school. We must learn our true creed from him and practice our true deeds by following him. Contrary to the views of the majority, one cannot acquire true beliefs and true deeds from the books written by eastern and western philosophers; the past and recent mystics and from schools of psychology and psychoanalysis. We can neither acquire them from the political dignitaries or historical reformers. We must look for them only and only in the school of Ahl'ul-bayt (which is the school of Quran and hadith). The Quran and Ahl'ul-bayt are two souvenirs that the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) has left behind and about them, he say:

"Your consideration for me lies in your guarding of these two things. Protect me by these two."(١)

I advise the youths that true creed and true deeds are no worldly goods that can be easily bought from the market. These two are the whole and sole of one's worth. It calls for precision and carefulness. It requires day to day effort. It calls for constant endeavour.

In this connection, one must lament and resort to him (for being Bab'ullah) for gaining faith, Ma'refat, certitude and protection. Our acquaintance with scintillating books that increase our Ma'refat and our company with virtuous and upright people who care for us (and do not call people towards their own self) moves us closer to him.

۱- Usul-e-Kafi ۱:۲۹۴

Thus, the basis and foundation for attracting his satisfaction is to remain a true Muslim and believer; to have good deeds and correct reflection; to possess the spirit of perseverance and to strive and endeavour.

Now for some points which we can benefit from traditions:

Kulaini has narrated a tradition(١) summary of which is as follows:

Ammar Saabati says: "I asked Imam Sadiq (a.s.), 'Which is better? A secret worship under the rule of a false government during the concealed Imam's time or worship under the true government of Imam......He replied, 'Ammar! By Allah, a secret charity is better than an open charity. A secret worship during your Imam's time (who is concealed during the false government) with fear from the enemies is better than the worship during the days of reappearance of the truth............know that if anyone amongst you perform the obligatory prayers in congregation and in hiding from the enemies, Allah would bestow him the reward of fifty obligatory prayers in congregation and the one who possesses good deeds and behaviour and controls his tongue, would be rewarded several times more.."

Also, it has come down that one day, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said to Abu Basir: 'Should I inform you of a deed by virtue of which Allah accepts all other deeds?' Abu Basir said, 'please inform me.' Imam (a.s.) said, 'To bear testimony to the monotheistic word, "La-Ilaha-Illallah"; to

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١- Usul-e-Kafi ١:٣٣٣-٣٣۴

bear witness to Muhammad's messengership; to confess whatever Allah has commanded; to acknowledge our Vilayat; to grow weary of our enemies; to submit before the Imam; to remain pious; to endeavour; to keep calm and sober and to await the Qaem.' Thereafter, he said, 'By Allah's Will, we would have a government. Anyone counted to be amongst the followers of the ' Qaem ' would remain pleased. He should await him; he should be pious and hold good morals and uphold constantly the spirit of awaiting him. If anyone dies in this state, he would earn the reward of Imam's companion. O blessed group! Strive seriously and await him. May it be (pleasing for you!"(١)

Now for the words of this compassionate Imam (a.t.f.s.) that have come down in :Tauqee

١. فاتقوا الله : fear Allah (Adopt piety)

٢. سلموا لنا : Resign yourselves to us.

٣. ردوا الآمر الینا : and push ahead on our basis (Return your affairs to us)

۴. لا تحاولوا کشف ما غطی عنکم : Do not make effort to divulge the secrets.

۵. و لاـ تمیلوا عن الیمین و تعـدلوا الی الیسـار : (do not tread on the right or left (Act moderately and .(path (avoid going to extremes

۶. واجعلوا قصـدکم الینا بالموده علی السـنه : Approach us and act upon the Sunnah (of prophet and (Ahl'ul-bayt) with love.(٢)

t:٢۵۶

١- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۴٩٧, hadith ٩

٢- Till here, from Ehtejaj ٢:۴۶٧

During phenomenon (for understanding our duty), refer to the : .....۱. و آما الحوادث الواقعه
(narrators of our traditions.(۱

(Pray excessively for hastening the faraj.(۲ : ۲. و اکثروا الدعاء بتعجیل الفرج

(Assist us in delivering you from troubles and conspiracies.(۳ : ۳. و ظاهرونا علی انتیاشکم من فتنه

(Cling on to dissimulation.(۴ : ۴. اعتصموا بالتقیه

Behave in such manner that is appropriate to our love and keeps : .....۵. فلیعمل کل امرء منکم
(away our anger.(۵

If our Shias (may Allah grace them with the honour of : ...–۶. و لو آن آشیاعنا–وفقهم الله لطاعته
obedience) unite their hearts and remain loyal towards their covenant, they would
(succeed in meeting us.(۶

In finding the ways for gaining satisfaction of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) and acting upon :our duties, you may refer to the following books

Paimaan-e-Mahboob -

Aafaqh-e-Entezar -

Muntakhab-ul-Athar : ۵۰۱ -

Translation of Mikyal'ul-Makarem ۲ -

t:۲۵۷

Ehtejaj ۲:۴۷۰ -۱

Ibid: ۴۷۱ -۲

Ibid: ۴۹۷ -۳

Ibid: ۴۹۸ -۴

Ibid -۵

Ibid: ۴۹۹ -۶

Ghaibat-Nu'mani (Arabic): ۱۹۴ ۳۲۹ -

(Wazifat'ul-Anam-Fi-Zemn-Ghaibat-ul-Imam (Arabic -

t:۲۵۸

QUESTION:۲۹

We hear that the Imams (a.s.) had the desire to see the twelfth Imam. Was it because they believed the twelfth Imam possessed a much higher spiritual status or it was their enthusiasm for a universal Islamic government and monotheism and justice that ?created this desire in them

:REPLY

All the Apostles and Imams strived constantly in upholding religion and monotheism and wiping off polytheism and blasphemy from the human societies. Thus, they persisted on this path and sacrificed their lives and wealth. For the well-being of the people and their piety, they went so far that they never had a moments rest. On the other hand, based on divine glad-tidings, they realized that its complete accomplishment would be fulfilled by the hands of the promised Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). For this reason, they were in anxious state in hope for

t:۲۵۹

achievement of this ultimate desire and they would encourage the people too to wait .that day

:Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says

لو أدرکتُهُ لخدمتُه أيام حياتی

(If I happen to meet him, I would serve him my entire life". (۱"

Also, Imam Reza (a.s.) would arise whenever he heard the word ' Qaem ' and after :placing his hand over the head, he would say

اللهم عجِّل فرجه و سهِّل مخرجه

(O Allah! Hasten his faraj and make easy his rise."(۲"

:Sadir Sairafi says

One day Mufazzal, Abu-Basir, Aaban-ibn-Tughleb and I visited Imam Sadiq (a.s.) at" his residence. I saw Hazrat sitting on the ground wearing a woolen cloak and was crying just like a mother who has lost her child. Sorrow and grief was visible on his face and tears rolled down his cheek. In such a state he groaned and said, 'O my master! Your concealment has taken away my sleep, seized my comfort and made (my sufferings to last forever........."(۳

If we look into the traditions, we will see that all the Imams (a.s.) have shed tears and were desirous of such

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Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۱:۱۴۸, hadith ۲۲ and translation of Mikyaal-ul-Makarem ۱:۱۳۷ -۱

.Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۵۰۶ under hadith No ۴ -۲

Ibid: ۲۵۸, hadith ۱۲ and Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۱:۲۱۹ -۳

meeting. Such eagerness exhibited by the immaculate leaders displays a way which not only the Shiites but rather all the human-beings of the world should pursue if they wish to attain salvation. Similarly, just like their divine leaders, they should pass their moments life by growing enthusiastic and yearning to see the heavenly saviour and .his government

The text of supplications and invocations narrated by Imams (a.s.) too reminds us of this zeal and anxiousness and moves our heart in desire for meeting him. In Dua-e-:Ah'd we read

O Allah count me amongst the helpers of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) as well as among" those who defend him; who hasten to fulfil his goal; who obey his commands and who ....assist him

In this materialistic life, those whose sorrow, grief, endeavours and struggles rotate around this goal come under the cover of the glad-tidings given by Imam Sadiq (a.s.) :who said

blessed are the Shias of our Qaem who during the occultation wait for his...." reappearance and who obey his commands when he rises! They are Allah's favourites (who have no fear and grief."(۱

:For further explanation, you may refer to the following books

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۲۵۸-۲۶۲ -

Kamaluddin: ۳۵۲, hadith ۴ -

t:۲۶۱

Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۲:۱۵۰ -۱

Mikyal'ul-Makarem ۲۸:۲۴۵-۲۵۴ and ۳۰۹-۳۱۶ -

Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۲:۱۲۳ -

t:۲۶۲

:QUESTION ۳۰

After reappearance, the world would become attractive and lovable and the human society would turn into an ideal society. Before reappearance and during occultation, ?what are the main duties for preparing such an envioumment and society

:REPLY

It's an innate issue that if man prepares himself for the future and looks forward to a phenomenon, he will consider his present life insignificant and will sacrifice it for that future event. For instance, if a secondary school student looks forward to become a doctor, he will learn his lesson in such manner that right from the first year, he will utilise every page of his book and every moments of his life for that future goal. Also, the one who desires to become an architect engineer and a distinguished designer in the future will give such value to his secondary school

.classes today that as if he is sitting besides the designing table in a university

The condition of one awaiting Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) reappearance too is the same. Such a person must arrange his present life in such manner that as if he is just now in the presence of his just Imam because the government of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) is a human and just government. Training and rectification of one's self and .the society are the preliminary steps

So, for setting up that monotheistic nation and a world full of justice, its our duty to prepare ourselves right today and strive for its achievement by rectifying our religious .beliefs and fulfilling the consequent deeds

We should remember that when we ask Allah by way of the following supplication its necessary that we should make ourselves worthy of such utterances via Ma'refat and .action

اللهم انـا نرغب اليـک فی دوله کریمه تعز بهـا الإسـلام و أهله و تُـذِلُّ بهـا النفـاق و أهله و تجعلنا فیها من الـدعاه الی طاعتک و القاده الی سبیلک

O Allah! We ask You for an exalted and generous government wherein You bestow " honour to Islam and its followers and bring disgrace to hypocrisy and the hypocrites; (and count us among those who call others towards You and show them Your way ."(۱)

For acquiring correct beliefs, we should consider the Imams (a.s.) as good exemplars and learn from them as well as their outstanding companions the method of

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۱- Dua-e-Eftetah

acquiring them which thereafter should be acted upon. We should strive hard and .exert all our efforts on this path

Regarding the duties of Shiites during major occultation, you may refer to the -:following books

- .Mehre-Mahboob, section ۳, the benefits and effects of love
- Ma'refate Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.), pages ۲۷۲-۳۱۱
- Khorshid-e-Maghreb, pages ۲۵۷-۳۳۴
- Aa'een-e-Entezar

t:۲۶۵

Section: ۳

Point

t:۲۶۷

:QUESTION ۱

For acquaintance with the affairs related to beliefs, particularly Imamate and Mahdaviyat, what are the sources? To what extent can one rely on the Islamic ?(sources, the holy Quran and the ' Ahadith ' (traditions

:REPLY

:It is necessary to pay attention to the following points

The sound mind of any human being accepts that knowledge of the past and (۱) present and its utilization is absolutely necessary. By innate nature, he relies on a series of news and information concerning rules and ethical issues. A minute observation reveals that man's individual and social life is indebted to the collection of information on various subjects where he has personally neither investigated nor experienced all by himself. Basically, it is not possible for any individual to investigate and experience all the aspects. Rather, by relying on the information of the past and present, he

.arranges his ordinary and scholarly life and avails himself of its results

Without reliance on information, can anyone gain certainty about the past sciences, ?historical events and happenings, existence of personalities, cities and places

Who can witness by himself the smallest as well as the most important of information and news of the past? Has every individual experience(s) the formula for all the various sciences? How has man succeeded in benefiting from the past sciences? Was it from individual experience? Who recognizes the parents of children out of experimental and scientific reasoning? In the entire human societies, how many have witnessed birth and delivery of children so that they acquire certainty that so and so ?!are their parents

All these are possible, only and only, through narration by reliable persons. Most of the phenomena of human life, and civil and religious laws, are the outcome of .experimental information, all acquired through narrations

Islam is a religion based on divinely granted conciousness (fitrat) . While it is the (٢) basis of acquiring the principles of human fitrat , it also calls the people to keep this fitrat awake. Its lucid principles and doubtless precepts call us to rely on the sayings of the prophets and Imams that were famous as trust and confidence during their .respective lives

During the length of history, the believers and others, who weren’t stubborn, relied on Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, and believed Muhammad as a prophet who from his youth was famous as "Muhammad-e-Amin". They reckoned his sayings to be revelation and accepted

!and acted upon his warnings regarding the Day of Judgment and chastisement

The same innate path exists for acquiring Islam and whatever has been taught by (٣) the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). For a research and study about Islam, there exists no way save the Quran and traditions; although these sayings are pondered over and .appreciated by the mind

The basis and foundation of the lofty structure of religion is formed by innate rational mind. In this regard, the holy Quran (the first source for the Muslims for acquiring the concepts of religion) has confirmed this innate path and leads its readers towards it. In various verses, the holy Quran has given validity and authority to the holy Prophet's sayings, deeds, and advises, so that the Muslims follow him. For example verse ٧ from :chapter Hashr says

ما آتاكم الرسول فخذه و ما نهاكم عنه فانتهوا

Whatever the Apostle gives you, accepts it, and from whatever he forbids you, keeps" ".back

It's clear that aside from commands and prohibitions, the holy Quran sets forth other matters too and intends to strengthen the Prophet's position. Undoubtedly, these sayings and deeds too amount to Divine command and alongside the Quran, they .form the total set of religious teachings and realties

آطيعوا آلله و آطيعو الرسول و آولی الآمر منكم

t:٢٧١

".Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and those in authority from among you"

It is cleat that obedience to the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and those vested with authority, is different from obedience to Allah's commands (as the word 'obey' is repeated). Although the words of the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Imams (a.s.) are only based on revelation and just as mentioned before, the aim for obeying them is only to strengthen their position, nevertheless, the wordings and interpretation of the verse opens the door for acting upon the hadith and sayings of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and .(.Imams (a.s

It's necessary to remind that while the holy Quran is guidance and light; by Divine Wisdom, the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his true successors have been made responsible for explanation the numerous ordinances, stories and matters pertaining to belief. Thus, the holy Prophet has introduced the whole Islam by referring to the (two weighty souvenirs.(۱)

Therefore, traditions (Ahadith) are the fundamental pillar for understanding Islam, .and have been introduced on par with the holy Quran

Our time is separated from the holy Prophet's time by ۱۵ centuries. Nobody during (۴) our time lived or experienced the events during that era. As was pointed out earlier, the only rational, reliable, and accessible reference for understanding religion is the transmitted narrations, the top-most being the holy Quran, and the Prophet's

t:۲۷۲

Referring to the Sunni and Shiite books, the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said, "I leave - ۱ behind two weighty things: One is the Book of Allah and the other is my progeny." [[Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal ۳:۲۶

Sunnah. Apart from the Quranic text, the Muslims have two ways for gaining access to :the events of that era

.First: The way selected by the Sunnis by following the caliphate system

Second: The path pursued by the Shiites in following the Ahl'ul-bayt and infallible .(.Imams (a.s

We know that both groups possess books on hadith, tafsir (interpretation of Quran) and history. The book named Sahih by Bukhari, Moslem, Tirmidhi, and Nesaee; another named Musnad by Ahmad, etc belong to the Sunnis. While Kafi, Basaer al-Darejat, Tahzeeb, Estibsar, Man-La-Yahzoro'-Faqih etc are compilations of the .Shiites

If a hadith is narrated by both groups, through the same narrator, that narrator is considered reliable by both groups and we name him (her) as a narrator having mutual approval. However, if a narrator is unacceptable by one of the groups, he is .considered as "disputed" narrator

While the Shiites consider the holy Imams and Hazrat Fatemah (a.s.) as the (۵) narrators having mutual approval, and the Sunnis consider them as "reliable and truthful" narrators. The Shiites also believe that they are divinely gifted with the position of infallibility, Vilayat (divine authority) and Imamat e (divine leadership). Thus, their narration about the Prophet's era is considered as reliable by both groups. So, if anyone from either group had lived during any of these Imams's time, would have accurately traced the Prophet's era without any distortion and acquired the .commandments and other matters with full confidence

Consequently, in the Shiite culture, the period for examining the narrators is about (۶) ۲۵۰ years (from the holy Prophet's era till the martyrdom of Imam Askari). Now, the chain of transmission of the narrated hadiths should be analyzed in the length of about ۱۱۵۰ years (starting from today and going back to ۲۶۰ A.H.). On the other hand, the Sunnis should examine them in the length of more than ۱۴۰۰ years (counting from today going back to the Prophet's demise). As a result, there exists more reliability in the chain of narration of Shiite narrators (provided the parameters for correctness of .(hadith are the same

If we take into account the divine position of Imams as well, then the whole issue would change drastically. This is because its no secret that their knowledge is linked to the Prophet's knowledge as well as the holy Quran and their immaculate status is confirmed by the Quran. Besides, the Shiite scholars possess special precision and parameters with regards to narrators because of their inclination towards the school of immaculate Imams (a.s.). For example, parameters like conformity of hadith with reason, their non-contradiction with the holy Quran, or other widely transmitted .hadith

We accept that there exist weak traditions too. But their presence cannot affect (۷) the credit of thousands of authentic and reliable traditions. Is not in the Sunni collections of traditions any weak tradition? A review of Sahih-Moslem and Sahih-Bukhari would give its reader an idea about the extent of traditions that exists in non-Shiite books, which contradict the holy Quran, reason, or other widely transmitted traditions. In this connection, you may refer to "Elm'ul-hadith" (Zain-ul-Abedeen ,Qorbani

t:۲۷۴

pages ۳۴۹-۳۷۵), "Sairi-dar-Sahihain" (Najmi, third section, pages ۶۶-۷۳) and "Azvao-al-Sunnat-ul-Muhammadiah" (Mahmood Aburiah).

(۸) Now it is time to introduce a few reliable Shiite books, on Imamate and Mahdaviyat, so that researchers can refer to them more usefully:

- Usul-e-Kafi ۱: Kitab'ul-Hujjah

- Basaer-ul-Darejat, Saffar

- Kamaluddin, Shaikh Saduq.

- Ghaibat, Nu'mani.

- Ghaibat, Shaikh Tusi.

- Kefayat'ul Athar, Ibn-Khazzaz Qommi

- Esbat'ul-Huda, Hurr Aameli

- Bihar-ul-Anwar, Allama Majlisi, Vol ۲۳-۵۳

- Wafi, Faiz Kashani.

- Tafsir Furat-Kufi

- Tafsir Ali-ibn-Ibrahim Qommi.

- Tafsir Ayyashi.

- Al-Tibyan, Shaikh Tusi.

- Majma'ul-Bayān, Amin'ul-Islam Hasan-ibn-Fazl Tabresi.

- Ehtejāj, Abu-Mansoor Ahmad-ibn-Abu Talib Tabresi.

About Imamate of Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (a.s.), the respected readers may refer to the following books:

Al–Ghadir –

Abaqaat'ul–Anwaar –

Tazkerat'ul–Khavaas –

Ehqaq'ul–Haq –

t:۲۷۵

Peshawar Nights -

Al-Muraje'at -

About Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and his Reappearance, you may refer to the following :books

Muntakhab-ul-Athar -

Eqdud-Durar-Fi'l Mahdi al-Muntazar -

Al-Mahdi Enda Ah'lal-Sunnah -

Ehqaq'ul-Haq -

Tazkerat'ul-Khavaas -

Al-Fusool'ul-Muhemmah -

:Regarding history and recognition of hadith, you may refer to the following books

(Azvao-al-Sunnat-ul-Muhammadiah (Arabic -

(Elm'ul-Hadith (Persian -

(Ma'refat Uloom'ul Hadith (Arabic -

(Muqaddameh Mer'aat'ul-Uqool (Arabic -

"Farhang Ma'aref Islami (Persian), Vol ۲, below the word "hadith -

Dayerat'ul-Ma'aref Farsi (Persian), Vol ۲, below the word "hadith", pages ۸۳۵-۸۳۶ -

Ta'sis al-Shia (Arabic): ۲۷۸-۲۹۴ -

.Hazrat Abdul-Azim al-Hasani (Persian), preface -

Just for the sake of good luck, we shall now set forth a hadith concerning Imamate of (.Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.) and about Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s

:The holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said

t:۲۷۶

Of whomsoever I am his master (maula), Ali is his master too." (Ehtejaj: Tabarsi: ۵۸-" (۶۷)(۱

:Also, Abu-Zar said: Allah's messenger (s.a.w.a.) said

The one who obeys my command has obeyed Allah's command; and the one who" disobeys me has disobeyed Allah; the one who obeys Ali has obeyed me, and the one (who disobeys him has disobeyed me."(۲

:About Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) the holy Prophet said

Ali is from me; his spirit is from my spirit and his clay from my clay. He is my brother," and I am his brother. He is my daughter's husband, the lady who is the chief of the ladies, from the first to the last. The two leaders of my nation, the two masters of the youth of paradise viz., Hasan and Husain, and nine offsprings from Husain are all from Ali. The ninth from them is "the Qaem" who will fill the earth with equity and justice (just as it would have been filled with injustice and tyranny."(۳

:Similarly, the messenger of Allah said

t:۲۷۷

Sahih-Tirmidhi ۲:۲۹۸ narrating from Fazael'ul-Khamsah-Fi-Sihah-ul-Sittah ۱:۳۴۹; - ۱ also in Mustadrak Sahih Hakem ۳:۱۰۹, Sahih Ibne-Maajah: ۱۲ and Musnad-Ahmad ۴:۳۷۲

Mustadrak-Hakem ۳:۱۲۱ -۲

.Kamaluddin: ۲۵۷, hadith ۱ -۳

The land shall overflow with injustice and tyranny. Then, a man from my progeny" (shall rise. He will fill it with equity and justice."(١)

We see that the Shiite, as well as, the Sunni traditions throws light on the Imamate .().and Vilayat of Ali and Mahdaviyat and Qaemiyat of Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s

:To sum up

١ . The innate and intellectual way open to man concerning the past era and .generation is narration and traditions only

٢ . This is the only solution in all the dimensions whether it is history or sciences, or .doctrines or precepts

٣. In narrating Islamic and religious realities, the only reliable references are the holy .Quran and traditions

۴ . The structure and arrangement of the holy Quran shows that it requires interpretation, explanation and commentary by the teachers of Quran (the holy .(Prophet and immaculate Imams

۵. By adhering to the divine interpreters, the Shiites pursue the path of Sunnah and .traditions

۶. Today, if we wish to acquire the realities of religion and the true interpretation of .the Quran, we must follow Ah'l al-bayt and their traditions only

٧. About Imamate and Vilayat, as well as, Mahdaviyat and Qaemiyat, we must search .for them in the Quran and traditions of Ah'l al-bayt

t:٢٧٨

١- Eqdud-Durar: ١۶, hadith ٣.

:QUESTION ۲

Why the Imams (a.s.) are twelve in number and not more? If their number were more and they were always present and active amongst the people, the phenomenon of 'Ghaibat' (concealment) would cease to exist with the result that all the problems .arising from ' Ghaibat' would fail to appear and people would not go astray

:REPLY

a) Out of Grace and Bounty, the Almighty Allah appoints Prophets for man's guidance.) With regards to their number, Allah appoints them as per His Wisdom and Knowledge. :We read in the holy Quran

یا بنی آدم اما یاتینکم رسل منکم یقصون علیکم آیاتی.....

t:۲۷۹

O CHILDREN OF ADAM! IF THERE COMES TO YOU PROPHETS FROM AMONG YOU (RELATING TO YOU MY COMMUNICATIONS.....(۱)

Verily, appointment of an Imam for Imamate is a divine affair just as appointment of an Apostle is a divine affair. Even the Prophets have no right of selection. Likewise, .their number is fixed by Almighty Allah as per His Wisdom and Grace

b) Whatever the number of the Prophets or Imams, this question would still exist and) ?you may again ask, 'What is the logic behind this number? Why not more or less

Thus, any affair whose very basis is in Allah's Hand, its dimensions and other aspects .are finalized by His Will and Wisdom; and we should surrender to His Will

Regarding the matter that Imams are twelve in number, you may refer to the :following books

Usul-Kafi ۱:۵۲۵ -

.Muntakhab al-Athar (Arabic), Section ۱, chapter ۱ -

Imamate and Mahdaviyat (Persian) Vol ۱, chapter concerning 'ma'refat' of Imam, - pages ۸۷-۹۴ and Vol ۳, chapter concerning glad tidings about peace and security, .pages ۵۱-۶۲

t:۲۸۰

A'raaf (۷):۳۵ -۱

:QUESTION ۳

?Isn't the verse ۵ from chapter Qasas about the story of Bani-Israil and Pharaoh

و نرید آن نمن علی الذین استضعفوا فی الآرض و نجعلهم آئمه و نجعلهم الوارثین

AND WE DESIRED TO BESTOW A FAVOUR UPON THOSE WHO WERE DEEMED WEAK "
".IN THE LAND, AND TO MAKE THEM THE IMAMS, AND TO MAKE THEM THE HEIRS

?(.So why do we say it concerns Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s

:REPLY

We observe one point in the Islamic traditions that is supported by reason and the Book. That though the holy verses are restricted, their applicability and reign are unlimited (would continue to prevail until the Day of resurrection). So how can we say that its meanings and

t:۲۸۱

?concepts are confined to the 'occasions of revelations' only

:The holy Prophet and Imams (p.b.u.t.) have said

If a verse from the holy Quran concerns a particular nation, and that nation passes" away and with it that verse, then nothing would remain from the Quran. This is because occasions of revelation of verses are restricted. A verse may have been revealed on the occasion of some specific event but with the termination of that event, Quran is not rendered null and void. The holy verses have been revealed in connection with some specific events and stories but their precepts and commandments continue to prevail. Therefore, although the occasion of revelation of the above-mentioned verse concerns Firaun and the oppressed ones during his era, yet its meaning and applicability are one common rule and esoterically, it concerns .(Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s

The one who explains (interprets and comments) the holy Quran is none other than the holy Prophet and those appointed by the Prophet. They are the pure and immaculate Imams. These teachers and interpreters have esoterically interpreted this verse to be related to Hazrat Mahdi's government. In this regard, you may refer :to

Tafsir Nur al-Saqalain ۴:۱۰۷, hadith ۶ ۹-۱۵ -

Tafsir Nemunah ۱۶:۱۵-۲۱ -

In addition to the apparent meaning, the holy Quran possesses another meaning named as ' ta'veel' (esoteric interpretation)? The matter of esoteric

t:۲۸۲

interpretation is discussed in the holy Quran. In verse ٧ from chapter Aale-Imran, it :has come down as follows

منه آیات محکمات هن آم الکتاب و آخر متشابهات. فآما الذین فی قلوبهم .....

SOME OF ITS VERSES ARE DECISIVE, THEY ARE THE BASIS OF THE BOOK, AND" OTHERS ARE ALLEGORICAL; THEN AS FOR THOSE IN WHOSE HEARTS THERE IS (PERVERSITY..." (٣:٧

Thus the allegorical verses are to be interpreted esoterically. In continuation of the :verse, it says

و ما یعلم تآویله إلا الله و الراسخون فی العلم

BUT NONE KNOWS ITS INTERPRETATION EXCEPT ALLAH, AND THOSE WHO ARE " ".FIRMLY ROOTED IN KNOWLEDGE

This shows that undoubtedly, there exist those who are firmly rooted in knowledge and know the esoteric interpretation. This verse proves the very basis of ' ta'veel' (whatsoever its meaning) as well as 'those firmly rooted in knowledge' (whomsoever they may be) who know the ' ta'veel' . Now we should find out who are those firmly .rooted in knowledge

After research, we shall realize that the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) [who has brought and taught the Quran], has entrusted its esoteric interpretation only to the Imams [from .[(.Imam Ali (a.s.) till the Mahdi (a.t.f.s

t:٢٨٣

These are evidences based on history and narration(۱). They have esoterically interpreted the verse in the sense that the occasion of revelation has been about Pharao's nation, but esoterically, it refers to Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) government. :For acquaintance with traditions, refer to

.Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in the holy Quran, ۱۸۶ below verse ۵ of chapter Qasas -

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) from birth till appearance: ۶۳-۶۸ -

t:۲۸۴

Concerning the fact that the Imams (a.s.) are those who are firmly rooted in - ۱ knowledge, refer to Usul-Kafi ۱:۲۱۳

:QUESTION ۴

Can we find any traditions or sayings about Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in non-Shiite books? Moreover, is Mahdi a known and specific personality or it's merely a title given to the ?one who would rise and save the world

:REPLY

The matter of saviour and reformer has been discussed under different names, in religions and ideologies and numerous writings exist, in this regard, with different .explanations

In the holy Quran too, numerous verses substantiate this point, a few of them were pointed out while replying to the preceding queries. In the Sunni books, discussions can be found about Mahdaviyat and the promised Mahdi. Numerous traditions have been narrated in books on hadith, as well as, the ' Sihāh' . Considering the importance of this subject, exclusive books too have been compiled on this subject. An accurate look into these traditions will lead a researcher to believe that the Mahdi is a known .and specific figure with known characteristics

t:۲۸۵

Amongst the traditions narrated from the holy Prophet (that has come down in Sihah and other Sunni books), we set forth the following:

The holy Prophet said:

* "The world would not terminate until a man from my progeny (whose name is the same as my name) would rule over the Arabs, and would become the king."(1)

* "Mahdi lives amongst my nation……To the one who shall ask from him something, he would bestow him so much wealth that he wouldn't be able to take it away."(2)

* "Allah shall appoint someone from my progeny, who will fill the earth with equity and justice, just as it has been filled with injustice and tyranny.(3)

* "Mahdi is from the progeny of Fatima."(4)

* "Mahdi possesses a broad forehead and a slender nose."(5)

* "The son of Maryam shall descend with the Imam from you."(6)

* "Mahdi is from our progeny. Allah shall set right his affairs in one night."(7)

The inhabitants of the earth and heavens shall turn pleased with Mahdi and during his rule, neither the

t:۲۸۶

۱- Sahih-Tirmidhi ۴:۵۰۵; Kitab al-Fetan, hadith ۲۲۳۰.

۲- Sahih-Timidhi ۴:۵۰۶, hadith ۲۲۳۲

۳- Sunan Abu-Dawood ۴:۱۰۷, hadith ۴۲۸۳, ۴۲۸۴ ۴۲۸۵.

۴- Ibid.

۵- Ibid.

۶- Jamaeh al-Usul; Ibne-Athir, Vol ۱۱, hadith ۷۸۰۸

۷- Sunan Ibne-Ma'jah ۲:۱۳۶۷, hadith ۴۰۸۵

(earth shall withhold its treasures or the sky its rain."(1) *

About the Sunni beliefs and traditions concerning Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and Mahdaviyat, :refer to the following books

Al-Imam al-Mahdi-Inda Ahl al-Sunnah; printed in ۱۴۱۴ / ۱۹۹۸. At the end of the book, - an index of ۶۷ books written by the Sunni scholars about Hazrat Mahdi has been set forth. Similarly, on pages ۶۵۳-۶۵۶, as per the narration of the book titled 'Al-Mahdi haqiqatun-La-Khorafah' by Muhammad-ibn-Ahmad-ibn-Ismail, ۳۱ books exclusively .written on Hazrat Mahdi are summarised

.Muntakhab al-Athar -

.Al-Mahdi al-Mu'ood al-Muntazar Inda Ahl al-Sunnah wa Imamiah -

.Eqdud-Durar-Fi-Akhbar-ul-Muntazar -

.Al-Bayan-Fi-Akhbar-Saheb-uz-Zaman -

t:۲۸۷

Al-Musannaf ۱۱: hadith ۲۰۷۷۰; Mustadrak-Hakem ۴:۵۵۸ -۱

:QUESTION ۵

In the Shiite traditions, the promised Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is introduced as a known and ?specific person. What has been said about his qualities and signs

:REPLY

The Shiite's link and connection with the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) through the Ahl al-bayt (a.s.), the matter of Mahdaviyat and Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is very clear and his .characteristics have precisely come down in numerous traditions

Since long, scholars have gained spectacular success in narrating various traditions .(.related to Mahdaviyat, Qaemiyat, and the personality of Hujjat-ibn-Hasan (a.t.f.s

In the Shiite books and writings, this matter has been clearly analysed in its various dimensions, siwe Mahdaviyat is one of the main pillars of faith, and Hazrat

Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is the twelfth Imam, and the successor to the holy Prophet's (s.a.w.a.). Following are few Shiite traditions that clearly throw light on Mahdi's identity: (here, we shall summarise only from one of the reliable Shiite sources namely Kamaluddin (written by Shaikh Saduq

* The holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: "Mahdi is from my progeny. His name and agnomen are similar to my name and agnomen. In creation and morals, he resembles me the (most...(١)

* Hazrat Amir-ul-Muminin (a.s.) said: "The eleventh from my descendent would be the Mahdi, who would fill the earth with justice, just as it would have been filled with (injustice...(٢)

* In a Sahifah (scroll) with Hazrat Fatemah Zahra (a.s.), it has come down: "...Abul-Qasim Muhammad-ibn-Hasan is Allah's hujjah upon His creatures and the Upholder. (His mother is a slave girl named Narjis."(٣)

Imam Hasan (a.s.) said: "Aren't you aware that except for our Qaem , all of us are compelled to swear allegiance to the illegitimate ruler of the time? Ruhullah Isa-ibn-Maryam would pray with him. Verily, Allah shall keep secret his birth and shall conceal his existence until his rise so that he swears allegiance to nobody. He is the ninth from

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١- Page ٢٨۶, hadith ١.

٢- Page ٢٨٩, hadith ١.

٣- Page ٣٠٧, hadith ١.

the descendant of my brother Husain. He is the son of a female slave. He possesses ⁕ (a long life and a youthful face...(۱

Imam Husain (a.s.) said: "The ninth from my descendant shall possess the sign of ⁕ Yusuf, and the sign of Musa-ibn-Imran and he is our Qaem. Allah shall set right his (affairs in one night."(۲

About other characteristics narrated by the holy prophet and Imams, the respected :readers may refer to the following books

(Kamaluddin and Tamam al-Ne'mah (Arabic): chapter ۲۲ till ۳۳ (pages ۲۱۱-۳۸۴ -

Ghaibat-Shaikh Tusi (Arabic): ۱۱۵-۲۸۰ -

Ghaibat-Nu'mani (Arabic): chapter ۱۳, pages ۳۰۴-۳۴۳ -

Bihar-ul-Anwar (Arabic): ۵۱:۲۸-۳۱ ۳۱-۴۴ and ۵۲:۳۰۹-۳۹۲ -

Usul-Kafi (Arabic) ۱:۳۲۸ and ۵۱۴ -

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۱۴۱-۱۷۹; ۱۸۲-۱۸۵; ۱۸۸-۲۴۳; ۲۸۴-۲۸۶; ۳۰۵-۳۰۶; ۳۰۷, ۳۰۹, ۳۱۰, ۳۱۲, ۴۷۰-- - ۴۸۳

Khorshid-e-Maghreb (Persian), chapter ۱۴:۳۳۵ -

Mehr-e-Mahboob (Persian): characteristics of the beloved, pages ۲۸۵-۳۰۵ -

(Faratar-Az-Eshtiaaq (Persian -

(Mau'ood-e-Jahani (Persian -

Asr-e-Zuhoor (Persian): ۳۷۵ -

t:۲۹۱

.Page ۳۱۶, hadith ۲ -۱

.Page ۳۱۷, hadith ۱ -۲

:QUESTION ۶

In spite that the promised Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is a fully known and specified figure, how is it ?that a few have ascribed and a few have claimed the post of Mahdaviyat

:REPLY

The fact that the characteristics of a person are clear and known does not prevent falsehood to take the seat of truth and the false claimants to claim the truth which actually arises from selfish motives. In the adventurous history of mankind, we find enormous number of people who have claimed Imamate, prophethood, and even !godhood and divinity; and even today, we find them with many followers

All around the world, there live people who follow false prophets and worship man-made gods! All the prophets were in clash with the idol-worshippers. This face to face clash between truth and falsehood has constantly prevailed. However, the main and fundamental

t:۲۹۳

point is that the All Wise God has finalized His argument for the people through clear .argument and proof, so that they may either seek guidance, or else go astray

:Chapter Dahr (or Insaan), verse ۳ says

إنا هديناه السبيل إما شاكرا و إما كفورا

SURELY, WE HAVE SHOWN HIM THE WAY: HE MAY BE THANKFUL OR " ".UNTHANKFUL

:Chapter Anfal, verse ۴۲ says

ليهلك من هلك عن بينه ويحيى من حى عن بينه

THAT HE WHO WOULD PERISH MIGHT PERISH BY A CLEAR PROOF, AND HE WHO" ".WOULD LIVE, MIGHT LIVE BY A CLEAR PROOF

The motives behind such ascription or claim to the post of Mahdaviyat can be -:summarized as follows

OVER-AMBITIOUSNESS AND DESIRE TO RULE: Man within himself possesses the (۱) urge to dominate and rule and considering that the post of the twelfth Imam and universal reformer is a matchless and unique global post, the claimants have made such claim so that they can satisfy their desire of domination for a few days in this .world

t:۲۹۴

COOPERATION WITH THE CALIPHS AND KINGS: The Umayyid and Abbasid (١) Caliphs, who usurped the caliphate of the Imams falsely, recognized themselves as being Allah's representative and the representative of the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.). For the sake of survival and continuity of their own rule, they encouraged those claiming Mahdaviyat and by this way made strong their own position. For example, Mansoor Dawaniqi the Abbasid caliph who supported his own son Muhammad-ibn-Abdullah who claimed Mahdaviyat or people like Al-Naser-Le-Din'allah Abbasi (born in ۵۵۳ A.H.) .who themselves claimed the position of Qaemiyat and Mahdaviyat

GREED FOR WEALTH AND LOVE OF THE WORLD: Out of obedience, the people in (٢) every era refer their religious and monetary affairs to their own Imam and the main authority for utilizing the obligatory or recommendable legal treasury is the lofty position of Imamate. Thus, certain groups have claimed this post out of greed for .gathering this wealth and achieving their worldly desires

SPREAD OF CORRUPT AND DEVIATED BELIEFS: Considering that the true Islam of the Ahl'ul-bayt (a.s.) ruptures any kind of polytheism and deviation, takes a hard

stance for any kind of prejudice in prophethood and resurrection, and supports the (۱) ethics of the Quran, a group by claiming Mahdaviyat, have strived to spread corrupt and deviated beliefs among the people. Through such claims, as well as, claim of prophethood and Godhood, they wish to replace the true Islamic creed with such unjust beliefs. Taking into account the fact that the mass hold a special belief about the universal reformer and consider him to be the only one to reform the creed and beliefs and reckon him to be the last life-saving ship amidst the endless stormy sea, certain groups have taken advantage and claimed for themselves prophethood and even Godhood like Sayyed Muhammad Bab Shirazi from Iran in the thirteenth .century

DIVERTING THE PEOPLE FROM AWAITING FOR THE TRUE UNIVERSAL REFORMER: The sinister policies of colonial countries fear the unity, consolidation of the Shiites and Muslims. Thus, by all possible means, they have always strived and still continue to create division and differences among the Shiites. By strengthening and paving the way for the claimants, they desired (and succeeded to a certain extent) to create divisions among the Shiites and Muslims so that they could rule and achieve their motives. As an example, we can name the

colonial policies of England and Russia in supporting and guiding Sayyed (۱) .Muhammad Bab

JEALOUSY TOWARDS THE IMAMS: The people's pure faith and love and affection (۲) for their Imam are another reason for making bright the business of these claimants. .Out of jealousy, they desired to occupy this divine position

PEOPLE\'S ANNOYANCE AND WEARINESS ARISING FROM OPPRESSION OF (۳) RULERS: Whenever the pious people turn weary from the oppression of the rulers, they pacify their sorrows by remembering Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and creating a spiritual connection with him. Thus, in history, we see the mercenaries have exploited this path .and claimed for themselves Qaemiyat and Mahdaviyat

Respected readers! In certain instances, those who ascribed prominent figures with Mahdaviyat were themselves more or less possessing such motives and not the prominent figures themselves who were sometimes among the virtuous people or the Imams. For example Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) who was ascribed to be the Mahdi (a.s.) .by some specific group

At times, a group ascribed this title to someone with the motive of fighting against injustice. Amongst

those who have been ascribed with the title of Mahdi but themselves did not make such a claim was Muhammad-ibn-Hanafia, son of Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.). Mokhtar-ibn-Abi-Obaidah-Saqafi revolted under his name and introduced him as the Mahdi and took revenge from the killers of Imam Husain (a.s.). After Mokhtar's murder and death of Muhammad-ibn-Hanafia, his followers denied ibn-Hanafia's death and believed he resided in the mountain of Rizwa and would return back.

Another one was Zaid-ibn-Ali-ibn-Husain (a.s.) who revolted against the Umayyid. His followers too called him the promised Mahdi. Yet another figure is Muhammad-ibn-Abdullah-Nafs-Zakiyyah who revolted against the initial rule of the Abbasids. His followers thought him to be the Mahdi.

The next group claimed the post of Mahdaviyat. Amongst them, we may name Muhammad Ahmad (Mahdi of Sudan) from Africa, Sayyed Ali Muhammad Bab from Iran (his followers well known as Babiyah), and Ghulam Ahmad Qadiyani from India.

About claimants and those ascribed to the post of Mahdaviyat, you may refer to the following books:

- Ma'aref Ma'areef (Persian), Vol ١٠ under the word "Mahdaviyat."

- Persian Encyclopedia, under the word "Sushiyant" and "Mahdaviyat."

- Daneshnameh'ye Jahane-Islam (Persian), Vol ١, under the word Bab, Sayyed Ali Muhammad Shirazi.

t:٢٩٨

"Ibid, Vol ۴, under the term "Bahaiyat -

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) Az Wiladat Ta Zuhoor (Persian): ۴۷۳-۴۸۹ -

Asallat-e-Mahdaviyat Dar Islam (Persian): ۱۴۴-۱۵۷ -

Tarikhe-Asr-e-Ghaibat (Persian): ۴۰۵-۴۱۳ -

t:۲۹۹

:QUESTION ٧

Does Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) possess a name and family name (surname) just like the common man? If so, what is his name and surname? Has any sketch made of his ?face and apparent appearance

:REPLY

:About his name and surname, it's necessary to mention the following points

Name implies proper name or proper noun that is kept for an individual at time of ❊ .birth, or at time of manufacture, without keeping in mind its meaning

Family name or surname is a recent custom from France. Under the term Fumille, (in ❊ .English, Family) household, kin, near ones, relatives family

.In Iran, family name or surname has become customary only in recent half-century

t:٣٠١

:The lexicon of holy book of Mr Hoax, page ٥٩ ⁕

It had become the practice of the Jews to keep names by considering its meaning, considering the person's character, or considering the events at the time of birth. During birth or circumcision of the infant, either the mother or father or both would consult friends and then name their infant accordingly.....Sometimes, inspired by prophetic names and meanings, names were selected.....and at times, due to the above reason, someone's name would be changed during his lifetime. For example such names as Abraham, Saraa and Yaquob. Sometimes the name is derived from the special event that occurred during his life-time like Ismail, Isa, Yaquob, and Musa etc. Many a time, they would select divine names. For instance, they would add to a name such words as El, Yah, and Yahoo etc and select such names as Samuel, Yahoosh'a .and Advinah. At times, one sentence was selected as name

As per religious creed, the names of outstanding figures, such as the prophets, have ⁕ .been made by way of inspiration or revelation

:Among the Arab tribes, three types of names were common ⁕

a) Name)

.b) Title (Laqab): comprising of a meaning that denotes some perfection)

اخ، اخت، ابن، and such words as ام and اب Agnomen (Kunyah): used with such terms as

t:٣٠٢

which mean the father of, the mother of, the son of, the daughter of ...) like) بنت (a)
.Umma-Salamah (ام سلمه) Abul-Qasim and (ابو القاسم)

Regarding the Shia holy Imams, name, title, and agnomen were used by inspiration, * revelation and divine command; and each one selected for specific reason. Traditions (from the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) support this view.(١)

About Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), we shall set forth traditions that show his names, * :titles, and agnomens

:NAME

Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) said to his wife (Hazrat Narjis Khatoon): "Soon you shall · (carry a son whose name is Muhammad, and he is the Qaem after me."(٢)

م ح" In ٢٥۶ A.H, Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) was honoured with a son and he named him · (Muhammad)(٣) "م د

Abu-Ghanem, the servant, says: "Hazrat Abu-Muhammad Hasan Askari (a.s.) was honoured with a

t:٣٠٣

Refer to Usul-e-Kafi ١: ٥٢٥-٥٣٥ -١
.Ibid: ٢ tradition ٢ -٢
Ibid: ۴, tradition ۴ -٣

son, and he named him Muhammad. On the third day, he showed his son to his · companions and said, 'he is your master after me, and my successor..."(1)

:TITLE

Abu-Haroon says: "I saw Saheb-uz-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) step into this world on a Friday in · 256 A.H.."(2)

Mahdi (a.s.) was born on Friday... His mother is Raihaneh, who is also called as Narjis, · Seeqal, and Susan...(3)

"Al-khalaf-us-Saleh" was born.(4) ·

Hasan-ibn-Husain Alawi says: "I approached Abu-Muhammad Hasan-ibn-Ali (a.s.) in Samerra and congratulated him for the birth of his son "Al-Qa'em".(5)

He was given the title of "Al-hujjah", "Al-khalaf-us-Saleh" and "Al-Muntazar".(6) ·

t:304

1- Ibid: 5, tradition 11

2- Ibid: 15, tradition 16.

3- Ibid: 15, tradition 15.

4- Ibid: 16, tradition 21 22.

5- Ibid: 16, tradition 21 22.

6- Ibid: 23, tradition 35.

:NAME, TITLE, AGNOMEN

Hazrat Jafar-ibn-Muhammad (a.s.) said: "Khalaf-us-Saleh is from my progeny. He is · the Mahdi (the one guided). His name is " م-ح-م-د " His agnomen is Abul-Qasim. He shall rise during the end of time."(۱)

About the fact that Imam-e-Zaman's name has been foretold by Allah, refer to the :following books

- Kafi (Arabic) ۱:۲۸۶, tradition ۱ to ۷

- Bihar-ul-Anwar (Arabic) ۱۶:۹۲ and ۹۶; ۱۸:۳۱۴; ۳۶:۱۹۵ and ۳۳۷; ۳۷:۲, tradition ۳; ۴۳:۱۲۳۹; ۵۱:۲-۴۴; ۱۰۴:۱۳۰, tradition ۱۹

- Muntakhab-ul-Athar (Arabic): ۱۸۲

- Muntahi'ul-A'maal (Persian) ۲:۷۵۷

- Yaade-Mahboob (Persian) ۱:۲۸-۳۰

:Also, about his names, refer to the following books

- Al-Mahajjah Fi-Maa-Nazala......(Arabic): ۳۲۲-۳۲۶

- Naame-Mahboob

- Najm-Saqeb, chapter ۲.

- Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) Az Wiladat Ta Zuhoor: ۴۴-۵۷

t:۳۰۵

۱- Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۱:۲۴, tradition ۳۷.

:HAZRAT\'S VISAGE AND APPEARANCE

:The holy Messenger (s.a.w.a.) said

(Among all the people, he resembles me the most in creation."(۱"

:Also

(He looks like me and his way is the same as my way."(۲"

:Also

Mahdi is from my offspring. He is like a sparkling star; his colour is the colour of the" (Arabs, and his body as the body of the Israelite."(۳

:About his description, we quote from "Khorshid-e-Maghreb", page ۲۸ as follows

His face is tawny; his eyebrows crescent-shaped and elongated; his eyes big, black" and attractive. His shoulders are broad, his teeth shining and wide. He possesses a narrow and beautiful nose. His forehead is broad and bright; his bones strong like a rock, and his hands and fingers magnified. His cheeks display less flesh and are slightly yellowish (due to sleepless nights). A black spot appears on his right cheek. His muscles are curved and strong; his hair curls over his ears. His limbs are perfect and beautiful; his figure is good-looking and charming; his face covered with halo of modesty and drowned with splendour. His appearance gushes with

t:۳۰۶

.Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۱۸۲, tradition ۲ -۱

Ibid: ۱۸۳, tradition ۴ -۲

.Ibid: ۱۸۵, tradition ۱ -۳

".splendorous leadership; his looks metamorphic; his cry roaring and breath-catching

About Hazrat's heavenly visage and appearance, you may refer to the following :books

- Muntakhab-ul-Athar (Arabic): ۱۸-۱۸۷

- .Najm-Saqeb, chapter ۳, section ۱

- Elzam an-Naseb (Arabic) ۱:۴۷۴

- Muntakhab-ul-Anwar al-Muzee'ah (Arabic): ۱۹۶-۱۹۸

- Besharat'ul-Islam (Arabic): ۲۹۴

- Fauz-e-Akbar (Persian): ۱۵۲-۱۵۶

- Seemayeh-Imam Mahdi Dar She'r Arabi (Persian): ۱۸۷-۱۸۹

- Mu'jam Ahadith al-Imam Mahdi [Arabic]: ۴:۱۵۴-۱۵۶ and ۳:۲۳۵-۲۳۸

- Mausu'ato Ahadith Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.) [Arabic] ۱:۲۷-۳۴

- Eqdud-Durar: ۳۳-۴۲

- Imam Mahdi Az Wiladat Ta Zuhoor (Persian): ۴۰۱-۴۰۷

- Ruzgaar-e-Raha'ee (Persian) ۱:۱۲۱-۱۳۲

- Mehre-Mahboob (Persian): ۴۹-۵۳

- Al-Mahdi al-Mau'ood al-Muntazar (Arabic) ۱:۳۲۷-۴۲۹

- Ghaibat-Nu'mani (Arabic): ۲۱۲-۲۱۶

t:۳۰۷

:QUESTION ۸

Is there any authentic tradition(s) specifying the characteristics of Imams, and in ?particular, the twelfth Imam

:REPLY

In reply to this proper and appropriate query, we have to say that not only one but numerous traditions have come down from the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in which one can find the names and qualities of Imams. Even in some cases, the characteristics of .their companions described too

For the sake of brevity, we confine ourselves to the precious book, "Usul-Kafi". This book, that was written during the minor concealment i.e., between ۲۶۰ A.H. and ۳۲۹ A.H., was thus closer to the time of scholars of hadith

t:۳۰۹

(and narrators, and the traditions narrated therein are reliable and authentic.(۱)

In this book, twenty traditions have come down about the twelve Imams and their characteristics. However, we shall restrain ourselves by only one famous tradition :named as hadith-e-lauh

:Abu-Baseer quotes from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that

One day, my father said to Jabir-ibn-Abdullah Ansari, 'I have some Private work with" ".you

.Jabir replied, 'Whenever you wish, I am at your service'

So one day, when my father found Jabir alone, he said, 'O Jabir, inform me about the' Lauh (tablet) that you saw in the hands of my mother, Hazrat Fatima (a.s.). What did ?(Fatima (a.s.) say and what was written in that Lauh (tablet

Jabir said, 'I swear by Allah that during the holy prophet's time, I entered Hazrat Fatima's house and congratulated her on the occasion of Imam Husain's birth. I saw in her hands a green emerald coloured tablet (lauh) with sparkling white writings, like the colour of sun. I said, 'May my father and mother be your ransom, O the daughter ? of Allah's Messenger. What is this Lauh

She replied, "It's a lauh gifted by the Almighty Allah to my father. There is mentioned the name of my father, my husband, my two sons, and the names of my

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.Refer to the last section of the book, "Imamate-Ma'hboob" written by this author -۱

".offspring who are the divine Guardians. My father has gifted this to me

Jabir said, "(O Baqir al-Uloom) Thereafter, your mother, Hazrat Siddiqah (a.s.), gave .that tablet to me. I read that tablet and made a copy of it

".My father (Imam Baqir) said to him, "O Jabir, show it to me

."He replied, "I will do it with pleasure

Then my father accompanied Jabir to his house. Jabir brought a writing inscribed on a deer's hide (or paper) and showed it to Imam Baqir (a.s.). Hazrat said, "Jabir! Look into ".your writings and I will read out to you whatever is written in it

Jabir checked his writings while my father read its contents. Not a single word was missed out. Jabir said, 'I take Allah as witness that I found the same in Fatemah's lauh :with the following contents

This is writing from the Almighty and Wise Allah to Muhammad, His prophet, envoy," and guide. The Trusted Spirit (Ruh'ul-Amin) descended on him, on behalf of the Lord of the universe. Muhammad! Honour My Names, and be grateful for My bounties and do not deny them. I am "Allah", with no partner- Who shall shatter the oppressors, .overcome the difficulties of the oppressed ones, and requite on the resurrection Day

Verily, I am "Allah" with no partner. I shall punish severely the one who has hope but not in

My Grace; and fears but not from My Justice! My punishment would be .unprecedented

O Muhammad! Worship Me only and rely on Me only. Verily, I did not appoint a prophet nor completed his task until I set for him a wasi (legatee). I made you superior over all other messengers and your successors exceed over all other successors. I honoured you with two lion cubs named Hasan and Husain, your .daughter's two sons

I made Hasan the fountainhead of My Knowledge after his father, and set forth Husain as treasurer of My revelation. I gave him deliverance with the throne of martyrdom, and he is the most superior of all martyrs. I have placed in him the 'Kalemah-Taammah" (the lofty realities of Imamate and Ma'aref) as well as all My clear proofs. My reward and punishment would revolve around his kin and offspring. The first of his kin is Ali, the master of all worshippers and the ornament of My past friends. His offspring is Muhammad, with same name as his great grandfather. He is the splitter of knowledge and the treasure of wisdom. Soon, the doubters in the Imamate of Ja'far (Sadiq) would perish. Denying him is like denying Me. It's My firm decree that I would honour his position and I would please him with his followers and friends. After him, a conspiracy would gloom over Musa; My covenant would never tear apart and My Proof never concealed. (Imamate and Vilayat) and My friends

would be satiated with overflowing cup. Anyone rejecting them has rejected My .Favour and anyone changing a verse from My Book has labelled Me a liar

After My slave and My chosen one i.e., Musa, would come Ali, My friend and patron. Woe to those liars who deny him. He is one upon whom I would lay the heavy burden of prophethood (in Imamate) and would test him through their (i.e. the enemies) triumph. He would be killed by the arrogant demon (Ma'mun) and would be buried besides the worst creature (Harun-ul-Rashid) in a city built by a virtuous slave (Zul-Qarnain). Verily, I will please him through his son Muhammad, his successor and inheritor of his knowledge. Thus, he is the treasure of My knowledge and the place of My secrets for the people. I would make his followers dwell in paradise and will accept his intercession for seventy of his follower's family-members while they were all worthy of the Fire. And I will raise salvation for him through his son Ali, My Wali, My .friend, My proof among the creatures and My trust in revelation

I will create from his offspring Hasan, the one who would call (the people) towards .Me, and the one who is the treasurer of My knowledge

such that love and affection would cover the whole م ح م د I will perfect him by his son .world. He possesses the perfection of Musa, the radiance of Isa and patience of Ayub

t:۳۱۳

During his era (his concealment), My friends will be despised and their severed heads would be gifted like the heads of Turks and Deylam (atheists and polytheists). They would be killed and burned and fear and terror would constantly accompany their lives. Their blood would colour the land their women would wail and cry aloud.

Truly, they are My friends. I shall cast aside the gloomy curtains of conspiracies and lift away the earthquakes and heavy chains of burden. Greetings of their Lord be upon them and they are the guided ones."

Abdul-Rahman-ibn-Salem related from: 'Abu-Baseer that, "If you hear no other tradition save this one, it would suffice you. So protect and keep it secret except from the deserving ones."

Those interested in the Arabic text can refer to Usul-Kafi: vol. ١, pp. ٥٢۶-٥٢٨

Regarding traditions that describe the qualities of twelve Imams (a.s.), you may refer to the below-mentioned books:

- Usul-Kafi (Arabic) ١:٥٢٥-٥٣٥

- Kefayat'ul Athar (Arabic) ١٠-٢١٢

- Esbat'ul Huda vol. ٢ ٣

Awalem al-Uloom wa ...Vol ١٥, section ٣. In this section, you will find traditions mentioning names of Imams (including verses related to them). Also ٣, chapter concerning (١- Hadith-e-Qodsi, ٢-

t:٣١۴

Hadith from prophets and other divine books, ۳- Hadith from the holy prophet of - (.Islam (s.a.w.a.) and Imams (a.s

Ehqaq al-haq ۱۳: ۱-۷۴ -

(Uyoon-Akhbar-Reza ۱: ۷۵-۱۳۲ (containing ۳۷ traditions -

Wafi: ۱, chapter ۳۰ and ۳۱, pages ۶۳-۷۶ -

Ehtejaj ۱: ۶۷-۷۰ -

Rauzat'ul-Vaezeen ۱: ۸۸-۱۰۴ -

Serat'ul-Mustaqeem (Arabic) ۲: ۱۰۰-۱۲۸ -

t:۳۱۵

:QUESTION ۹

How does Imam-e-Zaman's position and station differ from that of other Imams? Similarly, how does his companions' position differ from other Imams' companions'? What does this tradition imply that 'Imam-e-Zaman is the peacock of the dwellers in ?'paradise

:REPLY

The simile drawn between him and peacock displays the beauty and attractiveness of the spread of Islam by his hands because when a peacock spreads its wings it displays a beautiful scene. He, too, who bears the responsibility of spreading religion all over the earth, will trim up and give beauty to the farthest end of the earth with the banner of monotheism. Just like a peacock which gives beauty to its own surrounding, he would dazzle all eyes and perplex all wisdom. However, this interpretation, as per our capacity is indeed a deficient one because the Imams (a.s.) words carry tens of .other interpretations and meanings

t:۳۱۷

With regards to his rank and station, Shiite and Sunni traditions have separated the five holy ones (Muhammad, Ali, Fatemah, Hasan and Husain) from others. Among the five holy ones, the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) takes the lead. After him is Amir-ul-Mu'min (a.s.) and Hazrat Fatemah (a.s.) on par with each other, followed with Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husain (a.s.). But, with regards to Imam Mahdi (a.s.), traditions say, :'He is the ninth from the offspring of Imam Husain (a.s.)'. Some among them say

" آفضلهم قائمم"

(THE QAEM AMONGST THEM EXCELS ALL." (۱)"

However, a few traditions introduce all the nine Imams as equal in superiority and (excellence.(۲)

Considering the responsibility for forming the government lies with Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), and the onerous nature of this task calls for more strength and perfection, the period of his concealment is an opportunity for gaining special and lofty spiritual qualities. By worship, prayers, invocations, etc during this lengthy period, he gains more proximity to Allah and so gains more strength and power for carrying the .burden of this mighty task

His worship and supplications as well as his endurance vis-à-vis the severe problems facing his Shiites

t:۳۱۸

Muntakhab-ul-Athar : ۹۵, tradition ۳۳ -۱

Ibid : ۹۳, tradition ۲۷ -۲

has earned for himself a lofty position and prepared himself in fulfilling the divine .goals

Imam-e-Zaman is a personality praised and lauded by Allah's Messenger (s.a.w.a.). To Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.) and Fatemah Zahra (a.s.) his existence is a great solace. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) longs to be at his service and sheds teas for his isolation and separation. Imam Reza (a.s.) stands on his feet in respect for his blessed name and prays for his advent. In fact, every immaculate Imam (a.s.) has highly honoured him in one way or .the other

On our part, it's our duty to pray for him more than our prayers for our personal needs. We should pray for his well-being and early advent and strive for gaining his satisfaction. Our hearts should become fond of him through constant remembrance. We should make effort to attract all human-beings towards him and prepare ourselves for self-sacrifice. We should review our duties and always remember him. Due to separation, our eyes must burst with tears and we must await his coming. We should pray to the Almighty Allah for his advent and request Him to make easy his .onerous task. Inshallah

:In this connection, you may refer to

- Mekyal'ul-Makarem ۲:۱۷۳ (chapter ۸)

- Ghaibat-Nu'mani: ۲۴۰, tradition ۳۴

- Yaum al-Khalas ۲: ۶۰۷, section ۱۴

- Discussions on Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), chapter ۷.

t:۳۱۹

:QUESTION ۱۰

Does Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) have a spouse? Does he have children? Are his children aware that their father is Imam-e-Zaman? Is his wife aware that his husband is Allah's wali ? In general, what information we have, in hand, about Hazrat's family and ?his private life

:REPLY

If we had accurate information about Imam Mahdi's private life, then 'ghaibat' (concealment) would had no meaning. ' Ghaibat ' means that we have no exact .information about him

We are aware that Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) is the immaculate Imam, and the noblest exemplar amongst all in practicing Islam. He is the embodiment of Islam. He puts into practice all the Islamic regulations within himself. Later on, he would implement these regulations world-wide. One of the Islamic regulations (and the prophet's practice) is (.marriage. So Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s

t:۳۲۱

surely marries and, at present, he may have children. But we don’t have any details in .this regard

A few who were honoured of visiting Hazrat have, in certain instances, seen him at some specific places, with certain people besides him. This possibility cannot be completely negated that Hazrat lives in some particular city, village, or place that is unknown to the common man. It's also possible that Hazrat has no specific place. This too is possible that Hazrat possesses a family, spouse, and children; but they aren’t .aware of his Imamate

Suppose he possesses family and children the question arises whether they too have a long life like Hazrat? Reply: Traditions only talk about Imam's long life and nothing is mentioned about longevity of his family members. About his children, in some Ziarat, we come across the word 'household members'. For example, in Ziarat on Friday, we :read

" السلام علیک صلی الله علیک و علی أهل بیتک الطیبین الطاهرین

(Bihar-ul-Anwar ۱۲:۲۱۵)

About this topic, you may refer to 'Discussions on Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.): ۷۳

t:۳۲۲

:QUESTION ۱۱

:The following phrase is from Khaja Nasiruddin Tusi

و جوده لطف و تصرفه لطف آخر و عدمه منا

The existence of Imam is a grace, and his authority (and his precise presence for" ".guiding the people) is another grace. His absence is due to us

Is the sins on part of Harzrat's Shiites and the sins of his friends and near ones the ?only reason for his concealment and absence or are there other reasons too

:REPLY

In reply to another query about the reason and wisdom behind concealment, we mentioned certain reasons. We explained the difference between reason and wisdom (philosophy). We had said that we don't know the reason of concealment but we know that one of its philosophies is test and examination of the people. The

t:۳۲۳

peoples' sins are yet another factor. However these are not exclusive factors because, without reliance on the spiritual world, man cannot know all the dimensions of decrees and divine incidences. On the other hand, a lot of emphasis is laid on abstinence from sins; individual and social reform will bring near Hazrat's coming. Any talk about desire for Hazrat's coming is followed by prayers for his 'faraj,' and still followed by talks on morals and piety. By virtue of piety and pure soul, one can ask the Almighty Allah to hasten Hazrat's coming. But it does not mean that our reform would turn into an indispensable cause for his coming. Piety and purity of human beings .paves the ground for Hazrat's coming, but is not an exclusive or binding cause

With respect to the Shiites' complain about long period of concealment, the Imams (a.s.) have recommended prayers for 'faraj ' and observance of piety. Those recommendations have been in vogue during the entire life of the Imams, as well as, after them. Even those who were honoured of meeting Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) .during the major concealment have heard such recommendation

If a Shia believes truly that commitment of sins pains Imam's heart, and affects his concealment, he will certainly not indulge himself in sins and instead would strive to .reform himself

:About this topic, you may refer to

.Mekyal'ul-Makarem, section concerning duties during period of concealment -

.' Khorshid-e-Maghreb, section concerning ' Entezar -

t:۳۲۴

:QUESTION ۱۲

Have any details come down in the Islamic traditions concerning the era of .concealment? If yes, please mention a few of them

:REPLY

:Traditions about the era of major concealment can be divided into four groups

۱. Traditions that talk about the spread of oppression, tyranny, immorality, prevalence .of polytheism and sins, corruption and crime, isolation of Islam and Quran

۲. Traditions that speak of the signs before his (manifestation) (' zuhoor '), like the .revolt of Sufyani, the heavenly cry, split in the earth etc

۳. .Traditions that describe the qualities of faithful believers of that time

t:۳۲۵

.Traditions that enumerate the duties of Shiites during that era .۱

.Now, we shall set forth a tradition for each of the above groups

:Imam Hasan-ibn-Ali (a.s.) said .۱

The case that eyes await shall not occur until the time when each will grow weary of" one another, and one would spit over the other. Everyone would charge the other ".with infidelity, and some among you would curse the other

?I said: Wouldn't there be any goodness at that time

He said: The entire goodness can be found at that time because our Qaem would (arise and destroy all wicked people."(۱

:The holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) said

How would it be during the era when your wives would turn impure, your children" "?corrupt, and you would refrain from enjoining the good and forbidding the evil

?!They said: O' messenger of Allah, would it ever happen

He said: Yes, even worse. How would it be when you would enjoin the evil and forbid "?the good

?!They said: O' messenger of Allah, would it ever happen

He replied: Yes, even worse would occur. How would it be when good will be "?!acknowledged as evil, and evil as good

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.Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۴۲۶, tradition ۲ -۱

:Muhammad-ibn-Moslem says, 'Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said .۱

Before the coming of our Qaem , there would be certain signs from the Almighty" ."Allah for the faithful ones

?I said, 'May I be sacrificed for you, what are those signs

He said: "Allah says, 'And surely We shall test you... (Referring to the believers before Imam's manifestation) with fear, hunger, and loss in wealth and life. Glad- tidings are for the patient ones.' Allah says, "Verily, I shall test you with fear from so and so Bani....kings at the end of their rule, and shall test you with hunger arising from exorbitant prices and with loss in wealth due to corrupt trade. Similarly, we shall test you with loss in life (referring to sudden death) and loss in fruits arising from loss in first crop. Glad tidings for the patient ones for our Qaem's manifestation during that (time..."(۱

:Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said —

Before the rise of the Qaem, there would be five signs: The revolt of Yamani, the" revolt of Sufyani, the heavenly cry, split in the earth and the killing of Nafs-e- (Zakiyah."(۲

:One day, the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) said .۲

'!I wish I could meet my brothers'

Abu-Bakr and Omar said: 'Aren't we your brothers? We who have brought faith in you, ?and migrated along with you

t:۳۲۷

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۴۴۰, tradition ۴ -۱

.Ibid: ۴۳۹, tradition ۱ -۲

He said: 'You are severe Muslims who have indeed migrated. But I wish I could see my brothers!'

Once again the same question was repeated. The holy prophet said:

'You are my companions. My brothers are those who will come after you. They would have faith in me, and would love and assist me though having not seen me at all. Thus, I wish I could see them!"(۱)

۱. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said:

The one who dies with faith in our affair (Imamate) is like the one who has set up his tent besides the 'Qaem'; rather he is like the one who fights on his side; rather like the one who achieves martyrdom on his path. Instead, his position is like the one who achieves martyrdom with the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.).(۲)

— Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said:

"Piety, chastity, morals,... and patiently awaiting for ' faraj ' are parts of the religion of the Imams."(۳)

The aforesaid traditions clarify the severity of the "concealment period" and the heavy responsibility of a Shiite during this era.

Therefore, we have been trained to pray:

آللهم عرفنی حجتک فانک ان لم تعرفنی حجتک ضللت عن دینی

For more information about the concealment period, conditions before Reappearance, duties of those

t:۳۲۸

۱- Ibid: ۵۱۵, tradition ۱۳

۲- Ibid: ۵۱۶, tradition ۵

۳- Ibid: ۴۹۸, tradition ۱۰

awaiting him, and the qualities of believers during that era, you may refer to the :following books

- Ruzgaar-e-Raha'ee (Persian) ۲:۶۳۸-۸۳۰

- Muntakhab-ul-Athar (Arabic): ۴۲۶-۴۴۶

- Al-Mahdi (Arabic), section ۷, pages ۱۹۴-۲۰۸

- Mu'jam Ahadith al-Imam al-Mahdi (Arabic) ۱: hadith ۴, ۱۱, ۱۷, ۲۱, ۲۲, ۲۴, ۴۳, ۴۵, ۴۶, ۴۸, ۴۹, ۵۰, ۵۲, ۵۴, ۵۵, ۵۹, ۶۱, ۶۶, ۹۸, ۱۴۸, ۱۵۹, ۱۶۰, ۱۷۵

- Mausu'a Ahadith Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.) (Arabic) chapter ۸, pages ۲۷۳-۳۲۹

- Al-Mahdi, Mauood al-Muntazar (Arabic) ۲:۲۴۷

t:۳۲۹

:QUESTION ۱۳

Please describe the difference(s) between the times of Imam's presence and absence .((ghaibat

:REPLY

Before describing the difference, it is necessary to know that Imam-e-Zaman has presence in the society, but has no manifestation, and is not in the public. So it's better ?' to say what is the difference between ' zuhoor ' and ' ghaibat

While explaining the difference between the two occasions, it's better to recognize the similarity between the two, and then describe their aspects. However, similarity and difference are worthy of review and examination from two aspects: From the .viewpoint of Imam's existence, and from the viewpoint of people during those times

From the first aspect, a few of Imam's dignities during the concealment period are as :follows

t:۳۳۱

.۱ A medium for imparting the grace of existence from the Almighty Originator to the worldly beings.

.۲ Guidance for the beings, a leader for them, and the one perfecting the human souls on the path of devotion and bondage and shielding them via indirect training.

.۳ Redresser of grievances, a haven for those seeking shelter, and a help for the helpless either directly or indirectly via some special companions.

.۴ Worship and servitude in the path of endless perfection for Imam; implementation of the obligatory and recommendable acts, as well as, abstinence from unlawful and abominable deeds; transfer of ' mubah ' acts (that may or may not be performed) into recommendable acts with the intention of servitude and devotion.

From second aspect:

❊ Fulfillment of the above-mentioned instances on a wider scale and perfect manner.

❊ Religious authority and the one replying to matters related to belief, ethics and day-to-day affairs.

❊ A perfect specimen in all individual and social ranks in diverse dimensions.

❊ Establishment of global and divine just government and complete fulfillment of the aspirations of the prophets.

❊ Training the inclined souls directly and extending them to the level of perfection of devotion.

❊ Supervision and guidance of social, political and economic systems leading to complete justice.

t:۳۳۲

Active presence in the societies and direct contact with officials, governors and * .managers of diverse states

:Now, from the viewpoint of people

If people pay attention to the dignities in concealment period, they can reap the :benefits during this period, save, the following

(یرونه و لا یعرفونه) (They see their Imam but do not recognize him.(۱) .۱

For acquiring knowledge related to beliefs, ethics and duties they cannot refer to .۲ their Imam (a.t.f.s.) but instead turn to his common representatives (fuqhaha) in ' .(ahkam ' (religious precepts

Submission before the ordinary governments and being far from the universal, .۳ .divine and just government

They are deprived of the direct training of that teacher who is a perfect exemplar .۴ .and cannot sit to listen to his divine and pleasant speeches

.None can meet him out of one's free will and desire .۵

.(' They perceive the sun (Imam's existence) behind the clouds (of ' ghaibat .۶

Here, it's appropriate to mention some of the common duties of the people during Imam's ' ghaibat ' and

t:۳۳۳

.Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۲۵۲, tradition ۴, ۷, ۹ -۱

(presence' so that their special duties during ' ghaibat ' become clear.(۱)'

* (Necessity of recognizing Imam (a.t.f.s.)(۲)

من مات و لیس له امام مات میته جاهلیه

* (Obeying, following and adhering to Imam (a.t.f.s.)(۳)

* Referring to the Imam (a.t.f.s.) for resolving differences in matters of belief, interpretation of Quran and its esoteric meanings.

* Considering Imam (a.t.f.s.) as the perfect exemplar in all individual, social and divine respects which necessarily calls for comprehensive ' ma'refat ' (gnosis) of God.

* Presentation of beliefs, thoughts and deeds before Imam (a.t.f.s.) and adjusting and correcting them by his belief and thought via invocations and ' ziyrat ' like Ziarat-e-Aale-Yasin .

* Prayers for his safety, ' zuhoor ' (manifestation) and greater perfection.

* To express willingness to help and assist him.

* Constant and complete readiness for obeying his commands.

Regarding Imam's diverse ranks and dignities, one may refer to the following books:-

Usul-e-Kafi (Arabic) ۱: Kitab-al-Hujjah, pages ۱۹۸-۲۰۲, tradition from Imam Reza - (a.s.)

t:۳۳۴

۱- Kafi ۲:۲۰۸, tradition ۱.

۲- Ibid ۱: ۳۷۶, tradition ۱.

۳- Kafi ۲:۲۳۴

.Ma'refat-e-Imam (a.t.f.s.) Khorshid-e-Maghreb (Persian), chapter ۲ -

Majales-e-Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) (Persian), Session ۱-۴ -

(About Imam's Ma'refat (Persian -

:Regarding ' zuhoo r' (manifestation), you may refer to

Asre-Zuhoor' (Persian): ۳۵۱-۳۷۵ -

(Be-Sooye-Daulate-Karimeh (Persian -

(Kamaale-Hasti-Dar-Asre- ' zuhoor ' (Persian -

A selection of Kifayat'ul-Muhtadi (Persian): ۲۹۵ -

Dar Fajr-e-Sahel (Persian): ۲۹ -

Asre-Tala'eeye 'z uhoo r' (Persian): ۱۴۲۱ -

Concerning the people's duties towards their Imam, one may refer to the below-:mentioned books

Muntakhab-ul-Athar (Arabic): ۵۱۱ tradition ۱, ۲ ۵۱۳; tradition ۱-۳ ۵۱۴; tradition ۴-۶ ۵۱۵; - tradition ۸, ۹ ۵۱۸; tradition ۴ ۵۰۱; tradition ۱ ۴۹۵; tradition ۲-۵

Kafi ۱ : ۱۸۰ and ۲۰۸; also chapters on pages ۱۸۵, ۲۷۶ and ۳۹۰ -

(Paivande-Ma'navi (Persian -

(Raaz-e-Niyayeshe-Muntazeran (a.t.f.s.) (Persian -

Khorshid-e-Maghreb (Persian) chapter ۱۱ (duties during concealment) and chapter - .(۱۳ (Awaiting the Imam

.(Aafaaq-e-Entezaar (Persian -

t:۳۳۵

:QUESTION ۱۴

?(.What is ' Tauqee ' and how can one know that it is from Imam (a.t.f.s

:REPLY

.In dictionary, ' Tauqee ' gives the meaning of signature or seal of a letter

In Shiite terminology, it denotes letters signed by Imam Mahdi. Some of them are Imam's own writings, and some others are Imam's dictation and written by his .reliable companions

During the two difficult periods of minor and major concealment, direct contact with Imam-e-Zaman has not been possible. A few of Imam's companions would convey .' his message to people via the ' Tauqee

:For instance, the trustworthy Shaikh Abu-Amr Amri (p.b.u.h.) says

t:۳۳۷

Ibn-Abi-Ghanem Qazvini and a group of Shiites debated and disputed over Imam Askari's successor. Ibn-Abi-Ghanem said: 'Abu-Muhammad (Imam Askari) has departed this world and has no successor. Later on, they wrote a letter in this regard and mentioned therein their differences. They sent the letter to the holy place. They received reply to their letter in Imam Mahdi's handwriting as follows:

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

"May Allah protect you and us from conspiracies, and bestow you and us with the spirit of faith and certitude. May He safeguard us from a bad and evil end! Verily, news has come to me about groups who have doubt and uncertainty in religion and we have been informed of their doubt concerning their Master in the affairs. Therefore, we have become sorrowful, for you and not for ourselves and our condition have turned unpleasant for your sake and not for ourselves; since, God is on our side and so we do not need anybody, and we do not care anyone turning back from us! We have been created by Allah, and after us; all creations have been created from us."(۱)

Here, we observe how Imam (a.t.f.s) has emphasized about the legitimacy of his Imamate and succession.

Another example belongs to the recent century where a ' Tauqee ' was issued for Sayyed Abul-Hasan

t:۳۳۸

۱- Ehtejaj: Abu-Mansoor Ahmad-ibn-Abi Talib Tabarsi ۲, ۲۷۷-۲۷۹, printed in Najaf ۱۳۸۶ A.H.

(Esfahani and delivered via Shaikh Muhammad Shariat Shushtari as follows:(١

قل له: آرخص تفسک و اجعل مجلسک فی الدهلیز و اقض حوائج الناس نحن ننصرک

Inform him: 'Lower yourself before the people (i.e., all the people should have access" to you). Your place of sitting should be the entrance of your home, and you should ".fulfill the people's needs; we shall assist you

The proof that such ' Tauqee ' belongs to Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) is the reliability and trustworthiness of the deputies and the narrators of ' Tauqee '. All scholars and .contemporaries have confirmed their trustworthiness

The narrator of the first 'T auqee ' is "Abu-Amr Uthman-ibn-Saeed Amri". About him, you may refer to 'Kalemat'ul Imam Mahdi' page ١٣٩; and regarding the second .narrator, "Sayyed Abul-Hasan Esfahani", you may refer to page ۵۵۹ of the same book

Another reason to believe that such ' Tauqee ' has come from Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) .is the predictions that have come down in some of them

:For example, Shaikh Kulaini has narrated from Qasim-ibn-Alaa as follows

I wrote three letters to Hazrat Baqiyatullah (a.t.f.s.) about my needs, and informed" him that I am an aged man, having no children. Hazrat (a.t.f.s.) replied about my needs but did not mention anything about

t:٣٣٩

Kalamat'ul Imam Mahdi: ۵۶۵ -١

children. In my fourth letter to him, I requested him to pray to God to offer me a child. :Hazrat (a.t.f.s.) replied me and he put down my wish as follows

O Allah! Grant him a son so that he may rejoice, and make the current pregnancy of" "!his wife a son

I received the letter of Hazrat (a.t.f.s.) but I was unaware of my wife's pregnancy. I" went to home and inquired her about that matter. She explained that her problem is ".over. After some time, she delivered a son

(This tradition has also been narrated by Hemyari.(١

:Another case

Ali-ibn-Husain-ibn-Babewai met Husain-ibn-Rouh and set forth certain queries. Thereafter, he wrote a letter and dispatched it to Husain-ibn-Rouh via Ali-ibn-Jafar-ibn-Aswad. He requested Husain-ibn-Rouh to deliver that letter (wherein he had .(.expressed his desire of having a child) to Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s

:In reply, Hazrat (a.t.f.s.) wrote

We have prayed to Allah for you in this matter. Soon you would be blessed with two" ".beneficent and righteous sons

Thereafter, Abu-Jafar and Abu-Abdullah were born. Abu-Abdullah Husain-ibn-Obaidullah says: I heard Abu-Jafar (Shaikh Saduq) saying, 'I was born by blessings

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Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵١: ٣٠٣-٣٠۴ -١

(and prayers of Imam-e-Zaman, and he considered that an honour and glory.(١)

:Third case

:Abu-Ghalib Ahmad-ibn-Muhammad-ibn-Sulaiman Zurari said

Some time ago, I wrote a letter to Hazrat (a.t.f.s.) requesting him to accept from me a" piece of land (as gift). My intention was not for gaining proximity to the Almighty Allah, but wished to associate with the 'Naubakhtis' and thus come on par with them in worldly ranks. I didn't receive any reply. I insisted and repeated my request. Hazrat :wrote

Appoint someone whom you trust and register you land in his name because you" ".would fall in need of it

Thereafter, I registered this land in the name of Abul-Qasim Musa-ibn-Hasan Zajuzji, cousin of Abu-Jafar. I was confident in him and was aware about the magnitude of his ".honesty and belongings

After a while, when the Bedouins took me captive and plundered my property and took away about my cattle and belongings worth a thousand dinar. I was taken captive for some time. Then I released myself by paying one hundred dinar and one thousand five hundred dirham. Besides, they took from me approximately five .hundred dirham as a fee for the agents who accompanied me

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.Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵١: ٣٠۶ ٣٠٧ narrating from "Feh'rest" of Najashi -١

(When I become completely free, I felt in need of that land and then sold it.(۱)

In all these instances, we see Imam's predictions have turned true and so the authenticity of ' Tauqee ' is well established.

For referring to the 'Tauqees' , you may read the following books:

- Kalemat'ul Imam Mahdi (Arabic): ۱۴۳-۲۵۸

- Bihar-ul-Anwar (Arabic) ۵۳: ۱۵۰-۱۹۸

- Kamaluddin (Arabic) ۲: ۴۸۲-۵۲۳

- Ghaibat: Shaikh Tusi (Arabic) ۱۷۲-۱۹۹

- Elzam-ul-Naseb (Arabic) ۱: ۴۳۵-۴۶۹

- Ruzgaar-e-Raha'ee ۲: ۱۲۸۵-۱۲۸۶ (index of ' tauqees '

- Hayat'ul Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi: ۶۵-۹۰

- Al-Mokhtar Min Kalemat'ul Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.)

- Muntakhab-ul-Anwar-al-Mozee'a: ۱۱۸-۱۳۴

- Al-Sahifat'ul Mahdiyah: ۲۲۳-۲۵۷

۱- Ghaibat: Muhammad-ibn-Hasan Tusi, page ۱۸۶; Maktab Nainawa, Tehran.

:QUESTION ۱۵

Is it possible to narrate, with documentary proof, one of the meetings of Imam ?(.(a.t.f.s

:REPLY

It's not possible to count the number of the meetings of the fortunate ones who have had with Imam (a.t.f.s.) either during the minor or major concealment. Because, it requires complete acquaintance of everything in this world, including Imam's .programs. Such knowledge and acquaintance is only with Imam (a.t.f.s.) himself

Nevertheless, in order to show some cases and statistics we shall list down some of .the reliable and warranted sayings

Those whose hearts have blazed to see their Imam (a.t.f.s.) and have always awaited his blessed assistance have, in the length of history, compiled certain collections which we set forth in sequence of historical works. Thereafter, we will describe one :(.warranted meeting with Imam (a.t.f.s

t:۳۴۳

۱. Usul-Kafi, Theqat'ul-Islam Kulaini, (died in ۳۲۹ A.H.), Vol ۱ pages ۵۱۴-۵۲۵ containing ۳۱ traditions.

۲. Al-Ershad, Shaikh Mufid, (died in ۴۱۳ A.H.), Vol ۱۱, page ۳۵۱-۳۶۷ chapter concerning visitations and miracles of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.).

۳. Kamaluddin by Shaikh Saduq (died in ۳۸۱ A.H.), page ۴۳۴-۴۷۹ containing ۲۶ traditions and incidents of visitations.

۴. Ghaibat by Shaikh Tousi (died in ۴۶۰ A.H.), page ۱۵۲-۱۷۲; visitations and miracles.

۵. Elm-ul-Yaqeen by Faiz Kashani (died in ۱۰۹۱ A.H.) Vol ۲, page ۷۸۴-۷۸۸

۶. Wafi by Faiz Kashani (died in ۱۰۹۱ A.H.) Vol ۱, page ۲۰۱ containing traditions about those who have visited Imam (a.t.f.s.).

۷. Esbat'ul-Huda by Shaikh Hurr Aameli (died in ۱۱۰۴ A.H.), Vol ۷, page ۲۷۰-۳۸۳ comprising ۱۷۰ miracles and visitations with Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.).

۸. Hilyat'ul-Abrar by Sayyed Hashim Bahrani (died in ۱۱۰۹ A.H.) Vol ۷, page ۵۲۲-۵۴۸ in traditions wherein Imam's visitation is implicitly confirmed from birth till martyrdom of his father Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.).

۹. Rauzana'e-Be'-Khorshid (translation of 'Tabserat'ul-Vali") by Sayyed Hashim Bahrani (died in ۱۱۰۹ A.H.); translator: Sayyed Hasan Eftekharzadeh, comprising ۵۵ incidents about meetings with Imam (a.t.f.s.).

A selection of Kifayat'ul Muhtadi written by Sayyed Muhammad Mir Luhi Esfahani (۱۱th

century A.H.) page ۲۵۰-۲۵۵ containing names of those who have visited Imam .۱ .(.(a.t.f.s

Bihar-ul-Anwar by Mullah Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (died in ۱۱۱۱ A.H.), Vol ۵۲ page ۱- .۲ ۸۹

Jannat'ul-Ma'wa by Mirza Husain Nuri (died in ۱۳۲۰ A.H.), supplement of Bihar-ul- .۳ .(.Anwar ۵۳: ۲۰۰-۲۳۶ mentioning ۵۹ meetings with Imam (a.t.f.s

Najm-Saqeb by Mirza Husain Nuri (died in ۱۳۲۰ A.H.) chapter ۷ containing ۱۰۰ .۴ .(.meetings with Imam (a.t.f.s

Muntakhab-ul-Athar by Lutfullah Safi Golpayagani (contemporary writer), page ۳۵۸- .۵ ۳۸۱ describing the meetings during minor concealment and on page ۴۱۲-۴۲۰ containing .۱۳ events about meetings during major concealment

Re'ayat-ul-Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) by Ali Karimi Jahroomi (contemporary writer) .۶ .describing ۳۰ events concerning Imam's help to the Shia religious leaders

Now, we shall set forth one of such meetings with Imam (a.t.f.s.) from the invaluable (book "Kamaluddin" written by Shaikh Saduq:(۱

Ahmad-ibn-Ishaq-ibn-Sa'd Ashari says: I approached Abu-Muhammad Hasan-ibn-Ali (eleventh Imam). I was in thought of asking him about his successor. Before I could :speak, he took the initiative and said

t:۳۴۵

.Kamaluddin: ۳۸۴, chapter ۳۸, tradition ۱ -۱

Ahmad-ibn-Ishaaq! Verily, right from the creation of Adam till today and till the day of" resurrection, the Almighty Allah has never kept and will never keep the earth devoid of His "hojjat". It is due to Allah's 'hojjat' that the calamities are lifted from the earth; ".the rain pours from the sky; the bounties are drawn out from the land

,Ahmad-ibn-Ishaaq replied

O son of Allah's messenger, then who is the Imam and your successor? Imam (a.s.)" stood up instantly and went inside the room of his house. Moments later, he came out with a three year old child in arms resembling the fourteen-night moon in beauty. He :said

Ahmad-ibn-Ishaaq! It's only because of your special dignity before the Almighty Allah" and His Hojjat(s) that I am now showing my child to you. His name and agnomen is the same as that of Allah's Messenger. He is the same who would fill the earth with justice .and equity just as it would be filled with cruelty and injustice

O Ahmad-ibn-Ishaaq! He is like Khizr and Zul-Qarnain amongst this 'Ummah' (nation). I swear by Allah, that he would be concealed. During the concealment period, none would be delivered from this test and destruction, save those whose faith in Imamate has been set firm by the Almighty Allah and has made them fortunate in praying for ".(Hazrat's ' faraj ' and ' zuhoor ' (Reappearance

Ahmad-ibn-Ishaaq said; "O my Master! Is there a sign so that my heart finds "?comfort

t:۳۴۶

:Here, the child started to speak in eloquent Arabic and said

I am Baqiyat'ullah on Allah's land and the avenger of Allah's enemies. (O Ahmad-ibn-" "!Ishaaq) After this visitation, do not look for any other sign and trace

Ahmad-ibn-Ishaaq says, "I left Imam Askar's house with great joy and happiness. The next morning, I again visited Imam Askari and asked: "O son of Allah's Messenger, I am extremely pleased for casting me this favour. How does your ?successor resemble Khizr and Zul-Qarnain

'!Imam (a.s.) replied: 'His living in concealment for a very long time

?I said: Does it imply that his ' ghaibat ' (concealment) would be a long one

Imam (a.s.) said: By Allah, it would be so long that the majority of his followers wouldn't remain steadfast and would abandon their faith save those from whom Allah has taken an agreement regarding our ' Vilayat ', and has strengthened their faith in .their hearts

O Ahmad-ibn-Ishaaq! This is a mysterious affair and the ' ghaib ' (unseen) from Allah! Preserve and conceal it, and be amongst the thankfuls so that on the day of ".resurrection you would be among the ' Elliyeen ' accompanying us

Respected readers, we have selected the above visitation because it contains numerous points. Those interested in reading about other visitations during major

and minor concealment can refer to the books that were introduced in the foregoing .pages

It's necessary to remind that Shaikh Saduq is one of the greatest and most reliable Shiite ' Muhaddis ' (scholar of hadith). His book "Man-La-Ya'hzorul-Faqih" is one of the four main reliable Shiite reference books of traditions. His other book "Kamaluddin" was written by the Imam-e-Zaman's instructions; and his own birth .(took place by Imam's prayers. (Refer to Introduction of Kamaluddin

t:۳۴۸

:QUESTION ۱۶

The ' Tauqees ' that have been issued talk about what topic(s) or subject(s), and are ?they useful for the common man

:REPLY

We should know that just like all other traditions from our Imams (a.s.), the ' Tauqees' issued by Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) too contain different matters related to beliefs, origin of creation, resurrection, ethics, jurisprudence, history, science, and queries about claimants, deputyship, etc. Therefore, though they have been issued in special .cases, they are useful for all the Shiites

:For instance

: ABOUT THE FACT THAT WE CANNOT FIX ANY NAME AND ATTRIBUTE FOR ALLAH

تعالی الله و جل عما یصفون سبحانه و بحمده

t:۳۴۹

"ALLAH IS FAR ABOVE WHAT ONE CAN DESCRIBE OR ATTRIBUTE, AND I PURIFY HIM (ATTRIBUTE INVIOLABILITY TO HIM) BY PRAISING HIM."(١)

OR ABOUT ALLAH\'S GRACE:

و الله يلهمكم الرشد و يلطف لكم فى التوفيق برحمته

"AND ALLAH SHOWS THE PATH OF GUIDANCE AND RECTITUDE AND MAKES EASY YOUR PROSPERITY BY HIS MERCY."(٢)

OR CONCERNING THE FACT THAT ETERNITY OF TRUTH AND DESTRUCTION OF FALSEHOOD IS ALLAH\'S WAY AND CUSTOM:

حفظ الله الحق على آهله و آقره فى مستقره

"ALLAH HAS SAFEGUARDED TRUTH ALONG WITH ITS SEEKERS AND HAS SET IT FIRM IN ITS PLACE."(٣)

ABOUT THE NECESSITY OF HAVING \' MA\'REFAT \' (GNOSIS) OF IMAM:

"If our Shiites (may Allah grant them success in their obedience) were unanimous in carrying out their promise that lies on their shoulders, our auspicious meeting with them would not have been delayed."(۴)

ABOUT THE FACT THAT IMAM\'S EXISTENCE IS THE SOURCE OF PEOPLES\' PROTECTION:

t:٣۵٠

١- Kalemat'ul Imam al-Mahdi: ٢۶۴

٢- IBID: ١٩٣

٣- IBID: ٢٩٨

۴- Ibid: ٢٠٠

We are witness and observe your supplications. May Allah protect you by that" (medium which Allah has bestowed upon you via His favorites (immaculate ones)"(1)

:(ABOUT THE CERTAINTY OF \' ZUHOOR \' (MANIFESTATION

و الله متم نوره و لو کره المشرکون

ALLAH WOULD COMPLETE HIS LIGHT EVEN THOUGH THE POLYTHEISTS MAY " (DISLIKE IT".(2)

:ABOUT IMAM\'S AID AND ASSISTANCE TO HIS SHIITES

Anyhow, we have news about you and are aware of your condition and nothing is" hidden from us about yourselves. We are aware of the wretched and helpless state that you have fallen into; from the time majority amongst you have pursued some unworthy deeds (that were abstained by your virtuous predecessors) and have broken the divine promise and pact in such manner that as if you are unaware about (the existence of such pact".(3)

:ABOUT REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS

آخطآت بردک برنا فاذا استغفرت الله عز و جل فاالله یغفر لک

YOU HAVE ERRED BY REFUSING OUR FAVOURS AND IF YOUR SEEK FORGIVENESS " (FROM ALLAH, SURELY ALLAH WILL FORGIVE YOU."(4)

t:۳۵۱

۱- Ibid: ۱۹۶

۲- IBID: ۱۹۰

۳- Ibid: ۱۹۰

۴- IBID: ۳۷۶

:ABOUT FULFILLING THE PEOPLES\' NEEDS

قل له: آرخص نفسک واجعل مجلسک فی الدهلیز واقض حوائج الناس نحن ننصرک

INFORM HIM: \'LOWER YOURSELF BEFORE THE PEOPLE (I.E., ALL THE PEOPLE" SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO YOU). YOUR PLACE OF SITTING SHOULD BE A CORRIDOR AND YOU SHOULD FULFILL THE PEOPLE\'S NEEDS. BESIDES, WE SHALL ASSIST (YOU."(۱)

:ABOUT THE DEPUTIES

و آما محمد بن عثمان العمروی رضی الله عنه و عن آبیه من قبل فانه ثقتی و کتابه کتابی

AND MUHAMMAD-IBN-UTHMAN AMRI, MAY ALLAH BE PLEASED WITH HIM AND" HIS FATHER, BEFORE HIM. HE IS TRUSTWORTHY AND RELIABLE TO ME, AND HIS (WRITINGS ARE OF THE SAME VALUE AS MY WRITINGS."(۲)

:ABOUT THE THIRD DEPUTY

We are acquainted with him (May Allah bestow him with goodness and happiness" and make him fortunate). We are informed of his letter, and we are confident in it. He enjoys good status and position before us, which has become a source of his happiness. May Allah increase His bounty for him as he is an able

t:۳۵۲

IBID: ۵۶۴ -۱

IBID: ۲۸۸ -۲

guardian? And all praise is for Allah, without any partner and salutations be upon His Prophet, Hazrat Muhammad and his progeny!"(۱)

:ABOUT THE FOURTH DEPUTY

O Ali-ibn-Muhammad Samori, may Allah give rewards to your brothers in the matter" of your death! You will depart from this world within six days. So arrange and complete your affairs and do not make any will to appoint anyone as your successor because, ' the major ghaibat ' (concealment) shall commence and ' zuhoo r' (Reappearance) wouldn't occur except if the Almighty Allah gives permission and that would be after long years of darkness, when hearts will turn into stones and the land filled with injustice and cruelty."(۲)

Thus we see that a great portion of the invaluable religious heritage of our affectionate Imam (a.t.f.s.) has appeared in the form of letters and treatise.

For looking into a detailed index of ' Tauqees ', you may refer to page ۶۴۷ and ۶۵۸ of "Kalemat'ul Imam al-Mahdi", and the books we have named at the end of query number ۱۴.

t:۳۵۳

۱- Ghaibat: Shaikh Tusi: ۲۲۷-۲۲۸

۲- Kalemat'ul Imam Mahdi: ۲۸۴

:QUESTION ۱۷

In diverse traditions of the immaculate Imams as well as ' Tauqees ' of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) it has come down that the holy Imams pray and seek forgiveness for their Shiites. How does the effect of these prayers and forgiveness manifest in our day-to-day life? Basically, do such prayers have any influence in our worldly life, or do ?they leave their effect on us only spiritually on the Day of resurrection

:REPLY

The prayers of the holy prophet, the Imams and Imam-e-Zaman (p.b.u.t.) have common and absolute effects in this world as well as the hereafter.(۱) This is because, from the viewpoint of Islam, this world and the hereafter are not separated from one another. However, one should be careful to note that none of the works related to physics and metaphysics are ineffective in this world, particularly so the efforts and -endeavours of Imam

t:۳۵۵

About prayers of Imams (a.s.) for their Shiites, refer to "Bihar-ul-Anwar" ۲۶:۱۴۱, - ۱ .tradition ۱۲

e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) who is the most perfect human-being. The Imam and the All-Wise Allah's 'hojjat' (who is also wise) will never perform any useless act. All their actions are effective, and aside from leaving its effect in their own worship, they have their influence on others too. This matter bears numerous and precise evidences which can be seen in the history of Imams (a.s.). One of the responsibilities of Imams, in general, and Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) in particular, is the responsibility of praying for the Shiites. In their invocations and supplications, they aren't neglectful of praying for .their partisans

At times of hardship, they have prayed for them and solved the greatest of their problems. The story of Sayyed-ibn-Taoos is well-known when on the footsteps of the holy 'Sardab' in Samerra, he hears at dawn the pleasing voice of Imam-e-Zaman :(a.t.f.s.) saying

(O Allah! Allow our Shiites to live during our reign and glory."(١)"

:Also, in one " Tauqee ", Hazrat says

We pursue for their protection and pray to Allah (so that) our partisans' hearts are at" (ease and comfort."(٢)

.In this connection, refer to the book "Mehr-e-Ma'hboob" page ٣٠۶ and ٣٠٧

ANOTHER POINT: Not only the Imams' prayers are effective and responded to, but, as per divine teachings

t:٣۵۶

Translation of Mekyal al-Makarem ١:١١٩ -١

Ibid -٢

and Islamic evidences, the prayers of others too are influential and answerable. For instance, prayers of an oppressed for his helper, prayers of parents for their children, prayers of virtuous children for their parents and prayers of a believer for another believer.(۱) Aside from the responsibility of leadership, Imamate and Prophethood, the prophet and Imams bear the responsibility of being the father of their nation.

آنا و علی آبوا هذه الآمه

"I AND ALI ARE THE TWO FATHERS OF THIS NATION."

Therefore, their prayers for us (being their spiritual sons) are effective and responded to.

Besides, the more perfect the spiritual state of the one praying, the more effective are his prayers. The effectiveness of each one's prayers is diverse. The loftier a person the more supreme are his prayers. Similarly, the more superior a person's servitude and worship, the faster are his prayers answered. So the prayers of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) [who is the most perfect man and the ' hujjah ' on the land] are never left unanswered. Many of the bounties we receive are the result of Imam's prayers.

As such, it's worthy to prepare ourselves to attract our Imam's prayers because the chances of their prayers being answered are very high.

t:۳۵۷

۱- Kafi ۲:۵۰۹, tradition ۲

:QUESTION ۱۸

During ' ghaibat ' (concealment) what benefits can people obtain from Imam-e-?Zaman (a.t.f.s.)? What is the advantage of Hazrat during this concealment period

:REPLY

This query springs from a limited insight. Perhaps, it's taken for granted that the Imams and holy personalities must be useful and beneficial for the people. We never ask ourselves, 'what is our use and benefit for them?' whereas, it's worthy to know whether he is for us or we are for him? (This point requires explanation in its proper .(place

Anyhow, the answer to the query, 'what is the benefit of a concealed Imam?' is to be searched by analysing the benefits of Imam's existence (whether concealed or apparent) and then enumerating the difference between 'concealment' and ."presence

Describing the benefits of Imam's existence has direct connection with recognition of the dimensions of

t:۳۵۹

:his personality. As per Shiite view, Imam has, at least, four outstanding dignities

a) "Vilayat-e-Takvini" (authority over creation) and bestowing benefits to the)
.creatures by Allah's permission

b) Religious authority)

.c) Political ruling and government)

.d) Giving shelter, protection, and assistance to the helpless and distress people)

During the Imams' presence, all those ranks, save political rule, have been fulfilled for a number of Imams, though for a short period. The people benefited from their diverse dimensions. Not only have they taken care of the peoples' belief, ethics, and jurisprudence, but also bestowed to them spiritual benefits. Besides, during sensitive times too, they have helped them out. While the concealed Imam (a.t.f.s.) is not charged with religious authority and apparent rule (though in certain sensitive instances, he has also aided a few traditionists and jurists) his 'Vilayat-e-Takvini ", help, and assistance always prevails. The book "Najm-Saqeb" written by Muhaddis Nuri is a clear witness to our talks. You may refer to the section concerning visitation and meetings with Imam (a.t.f.s.). Here we shall set forth one such case revealing :Imam's aid

:Shaikh Ali Rashti, student of Shaikh Ansari and Mirza Shirazi has stated

When I returned from ' Ziarat ' of Abi-Abdullah (a.s.) and Shirazi was on my way to"
Najaf via the Euphrates river, I embarked on a small ship. Everyone

travelling in that ship was from Hilla. The way to Hilla and Najaf separate from Tuyarj. Except for one person, everyone in this group engaged in pleasure and jest. Signs of soberness and dignity were visible in him. He neither laughed nor joked. The group taunted his religion and rebuked him. Nevertheless, they ate and drank together. I was taken by surprise and opportunity did not arise to raise a question until we were .asked to disembark the ship due to shallow waters

.We walked besides the river. Opportunity arose to converse with that person

I asked: 'Why have you isolated yourself from your friends and why do they mock at ?your religion

He replied: 'They are my relatives from the Sunni sect. My father was a Sunni but my mother a faithful one. I too was like my mother and by blessings of Imam-e-Zaman .(a.t.f.s.) became a Shiite

I asked him the reason and he replied" 'My name is Ya'qut. I sell oil near the bridge of Hilla. Once I left Hilla for procuring oil from the Bedouin Arabs at the outskirts. I bought the required oil and returned to Hilla along with a few local people. We resided in one place. I slept. When I awoke, I did not find anybody. All had left. Our way passed a dry and arid desert place full of wild animals. No habitable place was near us .but kilometres away

I picked my luggage and pursued their path. I lost my way. I remained dazed. I feared from the wild animals as well as thirst. I called upon the caliphs and sheikhs and pleaded their intercession before Allah. Nothing happened. I remembered my mother's words who once said, 'We have a living Imam whose agnomen is Abu-Saleh. .He shows the way to those who are lost and helps the helpless and weak ones

I made a promise to Allah that I would call upon him and if he saves me I will accept my mother's religion. So I called upon him. Suddenly, I saw someone walking along with me. He wore a green turban on his head just like this colour (he pointed out to the green grass besides the river).

Thereafter, he showed me the way and ordered me to accept my mother's religion. He uttered words which I (i.e., Mirza Nouri, author of Najme-Saqeb) have forgotten and then said: Soon you will reach a village whose people are all Shiites. I said: My master! Will you not accept me till that village? He replied: 'No because a thousand people in certain towns have called upon me for help and I must save them.'

These were Hazrat's words that have remained in my memory. Then, he vanished from my sight...(۱)

In the traditions of immaculate Imams (a.s.), the concealed Imam (a.t.f.s.) and the benefits from him are likened to the sun hidden behind the clouds.(۲)

Allamah Majlisi too has summarised the matter into eight benefits. For a detailed account, refer to:

Mehr-e-Mahboob: ۴۲ and Imam Mahdi from birth till reappearance, page ۲۸۴-۲۹۵.

About the benefits of Imam's (a.t.f.s.) existence, refer to:

t:۳۶۲

۱- Najme-Saqeb, chapter ۷, incident ۷۱ with minor change in phrases.

۲- Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۲:۹۲ ۹۳.

- Discussions on Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), chapter ۷:۸۱

- Translation of Mekyal'ul-Makarem ۱, section ۳, pages ۵۵, ۱۱۹, ۱۴۱ ۱۹۸

- Khorshid-e-Maghreb: ۱۷۸ ۱۸۵

- Imamate-Wa-Mahdaviyat ۲, connection of the world with Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.)

- Najme-Saqeb: ۶۳۰

t:۳۶۳

:QUESTION ۱۹

Does there exist any known source from traditions about the phrase " Ya Aba-Saleh that is usually uttered by those seeking help (یا آباصالح المهدی آدرکنی) " al-Mahdi Adrekni ?(.from Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s

:REPLY

:Among the Arabs, agnomen is used for men and women for two reasons

Because of possessing some perfection. For example, a person who is very obedient ⁕ to Allah is named as "Abu-Abdullah"; a person with extreme virtues and superiority as ."''Abu'l-Fazl", and a pious and righteous one as "Aba-Saleh

Because of his (her) son's name. In hope that he (she) would possess a son in the future who would be named so. The agnomen of " Abu-Fazl " is given to him at the time of his birth or thereafter. The

t:۳۶۵

.agnomen of "Umma Fazel" is given to women in a similar position *

Abu-Saleh " is one of the agnomens of our affectionate Imam, and is more popular " among the Arabs. While calling upon Imam and imploring help from him, they use this :name.(۱) Muhaddis Nouri writes

Ahmad-ibn-Muhammad-ibn-Khaled Barqi narrates in his book "Mahasin", from Abu-(Baseer that Imam Sadeq (a.s.) said, "Whenever you lose your way, call out:(۲

یا صالح! یا آبا صالح! آرشدنا الی الطریق! رحمکم الله

help me) is uttered by the one seeking and imploring for help. =) آدرکنی The word Therefore, the name "Aba-Saleh" used for Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) takes its roots from .traditions

You may refer to the following books regarding names, agnomens and titles of Imam-:(.e-Zaman (a.t.f.s

Bihar-ul-Anwar vol. ۵۱; ۲۸, tradition ۱-۹ -

Muntahi'ul-A'maal vol. ۲, ۷۵۷ -

Najme-Saqeb: Second chapter, page ۴۱ -

(Al-Mahdi: ۱۲۳ (chapter ۵ -

.Naame-Mahboob -

t:۳۶۶

.Najme-Saqeb: ۴۵, fifteenth name -۱

.Ibid: ۵۷۲, chapter ۹ -۲

:QUESTION ۲۰

?Is Imam Mahdi's long life natural or is it a miracle

:REPLY

:In reply to this query, it's necessary to pay attention to few points

:Natural phenomena are of two types ⁕

a) Ordinary and general natural happenings, which occur very often like wind, rain, .sunrise, change in season, etc

b) Uncommon and lesser natural happenings like meteor, solar and lunar eclipse, .severe thunder and lightening, earthquakes etc

These two categories differ in numbers occurrences. The matter of Imam Mahdi's longevity belongs to the uncommon and lesser category that is

t:۳۶۷

.unusual among the people; but does not come in conflict with any law

All the sciences related to life and nature like biology, physiology, physics, medicine, * etc have not determined any limit for human life although as of today, they reckon the maximum ordinary age of a person to be ۱۱۵-۱۲۰ years.(۱) The proof that all the nature related sciences haven't fixed any exact age for human-beings is the following :matter

:a) Man is making all efforts to delay senility and old age that leads to death

Today, life expectancy (which in the beginning of the current century was less than ۲۰ years) in some countries like Japan has reached ۷۶ years for men and ۸۲ years for women. The population of old people in the world is on the rise such that the number of people above ۶۵ years in America alone has reached more than ۳۳ million people. The rate of growth of people above ۸۵ years in this country is ۶ times more than the (total growth of population in that country.(۲

It appears that in the future, vital steps can be taken in preventing senility of cells..... by employing genetic and gene-therapy in hindering the leaps and in-effecting the

t:۳۶۸

.Researches concerning longevity, senility and prevention of old age -۱

Ibid: ۷ -۲

(environmental factors that cause such leaps in genes.(1)

a) The exact and historical meaning of old age is not known and varies from person to person:

We still do not have a clear and complete definition of old age. Why and by which mechanism we turn old? This is a query with no clear answer. Gerontology is a science in which the process of senility is discussed. It's a science in its embryonic stage. Despite man's constant eagerness in knowing the reason for senility and death, it is only decades that scientific research has begun in this field. In spite of this short experience, vast discoveries have been achieved about the manner of this human process and assumptions have been made about their cause.(2)

The mean life span of every individual can be determined by means of some factors like style of living, diet, environmental conditions and genetic abilities. By changing some of these factors, one can subsequently increase the life-span (or average life) of an individual without any increase in man's maximum life span.(3)

t:369

1- Ibid: 9

2- Ibid: 27

3- Ibid: 32-33

With the discovery of the causes of common old-age diseases (like heart disease and cancer) and the ways for their prevention as well as cure, we can increase the life expectancy. Also, with the discovery of genetic and biochemical shortcomings (that leads some to experience a shorter life span), we can reduce the gap between life expectancy and maximum life span and allow a great number of people to acquire (maximum life span.(۱)

.a) Hygiene and nutrition has increased the average life span of human-beings

years before ۱۹۰۰ A.D., life expectancy was ۲۶ years and in the beginning of ۵۰۰۰... recent century, life expectancy reached only ۲۹ years. Better living conditions, medical care and decrease in death rate caused by infectious and child diseases has lead to increase in life expectancy and today in Japan a country that enjoys the highest life expectancy, the level of life expectancy has reached about ۸۱.۸ years for women and (about ۷۵.۹ for men.(۲)

:Also

In ۱۹۰۰ A.D., only ۴٪ of the population comprised people with over ۶۵ years old. In.... ۱۹۸۶, this level reached ۱۱.۶٪ and it is predicted that in ۲۰۳۰, it would reach ۲۰٪ of the total population. It means at that time, out

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Ibid: ۳۳ -۱

Ibid: ۳۷ -۲

(of every ۵ Americans, ۱ would be over ۶۵ years of age.(۱

:Similarly

In recent years, the death rate has declined for all the age groups. However, this... (decline in death rate was more so in case of age group of above ۸۵ years.(۲

:Also

one should note that the average life-span of man (which in recent years has..... reached ۷۰ years) was ۳۵ years twenty years ago. With development of science and (technology, the mean life-span is on the rise.(۳

With new discoveries, those familiar with the art and science of diet and nutrition... have worked miracles which were something unimaginable for their predecessors in the past. Today, with the help of food and its application, one can set sex, colour, eyes, hair, face, height, growth, health, resistant power and the life-span of foetus in mother's womb. In reality, one can deliberately alter the foetus as per one's desire (and bring changes in his or her creation and way of life in the future.(۴

t:۳۷۱

Ibid: ۳۸ -۱

Ibid: ۵۴ -۲

Secret of longevity: ۸۶ -۳

Ibid: ۱۶۷ -۴

:a) Scientists have enumerated the factors that prolong life-span

:NUTRITION

It is delightful to note that man's success in enjoying long life and good health is no.... more dependable on one's predecessors (like the matter of genetic). By precise exploitation of nutritional affairs, man can achieve this privilege all by himself because nutritional power and opportunity is the best gift of nature enabling man to achieve perfect health. By acquainting him with the type, quality and magnitude of nutrition, man has achieved long life and most of the hereditary flaws have been done away (with. (۱

:And

Alexander Abvagumultz, a Russian researcher and scholar, has proved that a.... person of ۶۵ to ۷۰ years old is young and is living at least in the middle stage of his life. Scientists believe that scientifically, all the living creatures have natural potentiality to live in good health about seven to fourteen times more than the life period from birth till puberty. A precise review shows that all the creatures enjoy this rule. By nature, the age of animals is no less than seven times their puberty period. In case of human-beings, the period of puberty differs in different regions

t:۳۷۲

Ibid: ۱۶۵ -۱

due to ecological conditions. In most cases the puberty age is reckoned to be twenty (years.(١

From the viewpoint of life expectancy, the safest period is near puberty age, when... death risk arising from diseases is one in two-thousand people. Statistically, if this risk is maintained at same level, then life expectancy at time of birth would be about ١٢٠٠ (years.(٢

:PHYSIOLOGICAL CAPABILITIES

It should be known that physiological capabilities differs from person to person and are controlled genetically. Even if we assume the senility growth to be same for all human-beings....the more the primary capability in someone, the slower the decline (and deterioration in the physiological reserves and the more would be the life-span.(٣

Firstly, the spread of primary physiological capabilities (that are determined by... genetic factors) is very diverse in the society. In other words, the vital ability and .potentiality of each individual varies from one another due to genetic reasons

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Ibid: ١٨١ -١

Research concerning longevity, senility and prevention of old age: ١١ -٢

Ibid: ٢٩ -٣

Secondly, environmental conditions and a personal style of living....can leave a (positive or negative effect on this primary potentiality.(١

:HONEY

it is seen that royal honey prolongs life by ٥٠ times in honey-bees! In other words,.... the difference in life-span of the queen-bee (۶ years) with that of the workers (٣ to ۶ weeks) springs from the fact that the queen-bee nourishes from the royal honey. Such findings are a motive encouraging human-beings to discover ways for (prolonging man's life-span.(٢

:PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

It has been observed that physical activity in the beginning of life prolongs life-span (and life expectancy.(٣

:WEIGHT LOSS

In its study on this subject, WHO (World Health Organization) has reported that long life has been witnessed in people whose weight was lesser than the average (population under control?(۴

:SPORT

A study was conducted on ٢٠٠٠ participants in a skating competition in ١٩٥۶, in a.... place

t:٣٧۴

Ibid: ٣٠ -١

Ibid: ٣٣ -٢

Ibid: ٨٩ -٣

Ibid: ٩٣ -۴

stretching ۲۰۰۰ kilometres. That study lasted for ۳۳ years and it was observed that they had a longer life expectancy than other ordinary people. It was thus concluded that people with severe and lengthy activity possess longer life expectancy.(۱)

:WALKING

The sports under consideration in this study comprised of walking, climbing stairs and games.(۲)

a) Although there is no reason for man's immortality, nevertheless man by nature, pursues to find ways for remaining immortal:

Man....is in search of a way through which he can succeed in terminating the domain of death. However, is it possible to achieve immortality? At the moment, it's not possible to reply to his query.(۳)

Many people lived a long life and their names have come down in divine books, historical books and books on hadith. For instance, we can name Hazrat Adam, Shais (son of Adam), Anush (son of Shais), Qainan (son of Anush), Mahlal'eel (son of Qainan), Yared son of Mahlal'eel,

t:۳۷۵

۱- Ibid: ۹۴

۲- Ibid: ۹۴

۳- Ibid: ۶۰

a) Khunukh son of Yared, Mutushaleh son of Khunukh, Lahak son of Mutushaleh and Nuh son of Lahak who lived for ۹۳۰ years, ۹۱۲ years, ۹۰۵ years, ۹۱۰ years, ۸۹۵ years, ۹۶۲ years, ۳۶۵ years, ۹۶۹ years, ۷۷۷ years and ۹۵۰ years respectively.(۱)

b) During our time, there lived people with unusual long life either. In a Persian magazine printed in ۱۹۳۳ A.D., it was reported that, "there lives a Chinese man named "Li-Ching", whose age is ۲۵۲ years and till now ۲۳ women have spent their lives in his home.(۲)

To sum up, divine means, special care, adherence to the laws of nature, prevention from senility and divine protection are the causes for Imam's longevity. He has a long life and a youthful appearance, which is natural but unusual. While this does not contradict reason it does not oppose the laws of nature as well.

It's worthy to mention that scientific evidences are set to resolve the improbability of Hazrat's longevity and stress is laid on the fact that scholars have not fixed any limit for human life. Otherwise, in the divine doctrine, the matter is far superior with no doubt seeping into it. This is because Hazrat's longevity comprising of birth, life, manifestation (zuhoor), global program etc are all

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۱- Torah: chapter ۵. Also, the holy Quran: Anbiya (۲۱): ۴۵ and Saffat (۳۷): ۱۴۵..

۲- Pars magazine, section ۲, page ۱۰۰-۱۰۱

.managed by Allah's Will and the slightest doubt cannot find any way in them

-:At the end, we shall terminate our discussion by narrating one tradition as follows

:Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) said

My son is the 'Qaem' after me and he is the same who shall rise while possessing the" way and characters of the prophets (p.b.u.t). He possesses a long life and concealment. Hearts will turn into stones due to his long concealed living. None would remain steadfast in their belief in him save those whose faith is set firm by the (Almighty Allah...."(۱

-:Regarding longevity from the viewpoint of natural sciences, please refer to

- Scientific researches about longevity, senility...

- Secret of long life....(Persian) pages ۸۶, ۱۶۵, ۱۶۷ and ۱۸۱

- Khorshid-e-Maghreb (Persian) chapter ۱۰

- Longevity of Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) from the viewpoint of science and religion .((Persian

- Muntakhab-ul-Athar (Arabic): ۲۷۴ and footnotes till page ۲۸۳

- Al-Mahdi (Arabic): ۱۳۵

- Bihar-ul-Anwar (Arabic) ۵۱: ۲۲۵ onwards, traditions on longevity.

t:۳۷۷

۱- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۲۷۴, tradition ۱ from Kamaluddin of Saduq.

:QUESTION ۲۱

?How would be the manifestation and appearance of Imam Mahdi

:REPLY

As per the traditions, when Imam would be on his way to Mecca, severe heat and fatigue would force him to rest under a tree. Gabriel would descend with a letter (while its ink is still wet).(۱) In that letter, Allah commands him to rise. He will come to Mecca. In Mecca, between ' Rukn ' and ' Maqam ' he would lean besides Hajar-ul-Aswad and the door, and call out:

"آلا یا آهل العالم! بقیه الله خیر لکم ان کنتم موئمنین و آنا بقیه الله

.(Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۵۷۵, tradition ۶ and ۵۸۰, tradition ۲ and ۳, new edition)

t:۳۷۹

۱- Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۲:۲۳۱

Thus, he will call the people in this manner. When all of his ۳۱۳ special companions (whether those of that time or those from the past who have returned to life) would gather around him, they would depart for Medina and then towards Kufa. They shall settle in Kufa and manage the affairs of the world from this very place.

In traditions, we find that the period of Imam Mahdi's state would last for ۷, ۹, ۲۰, ۳۰, ۴۰, or ۷۰ years. Regarding these figures, we had explained in our reply to another query that possibly that seven or nine years refer to the period for setting up the government. Otherwise seven or nine, or even thirty years of rule, after so long waiting will be too short to satiate the justice lovers. Thus, it's appropriate for Allamah Majlisi to say that probably the holy Imams didn't wish to specify the exact duration of Imam's rule and Allah is All-Aware of the realities.(۱)

About this topic, refer to:

- Khorshid-e-Maghreb

- Ruzgaar-e-Raha'ee, section concerning the true government.

t:۳۸۰

۱- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۴۸۸, below tradition ۵, narrating Majlisi's words.

:QUESTION ۲۲

In the writings about Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), we find sayings concerning ' Raj'at ' (return to life). What is its precise meaning? Can we find any decisive evidence about ?this matter in the holy Quran and traditions

:REPLY

Literally, ' Raj'at ' means "return" and "reappearance". In religious terminology, it ⁕ means to return to life, in this world, after death. One experiencing ' Raj'at ', will become alive and would continue to live once again in this material world until death .overtakes him

The holy Quran is the main documentary proof on ' Raj'at '. There, the Almighty Allah ⁕ has talked about ' Raj'at ' of prophet Uzair, the youth in the Cave, and a group from .Bani-Israel

About Uzair, we find this matter in Chapter Baqarah: ۲۵۹, about the youth in the Cave, in Chapter Kahf: ۲۵, about the Bani-Israel group in

t:۳۸۱

Chapter Baqarah: ۵۶, about the dead becoming alive by hands of Isa (a.s.) in Chapter Maeda: ۱۱۰, and about a group from Shaam in Chapter Baqarah: ۲۴۳. Here, we shall set .(forth only about the group of people from Shaam (Syria

:The Almighty Allah says

Have you not considered those who went forth from their homes, for fear of death," ".and they were thousands, then Allah said to them, Die; again He gave them life

They were residents of a city in Syria... for fear from plague disease; they fled to a... deserted city (all its residents had died of plague). They reached that city and died there instantly. Some time passed and their bodies turned into bones. "Ezekiel", a Bani-Israel prophet, passed besides them. By witnessing this city, he wept and shed tears and prayed: 'O God, make them alive at this very moment, just as Thou have made them die; so that they develop Thy cities, and they bear slaves who would '.worship Thee

Here, Allah commanded him to recite Allah's Exalted and Great Name. He called Allah by His Exalted Name. All became alive and while staring at each other, they praised .'Allah and said 'Allah-o-Akbar' and 'La-Ilaha-Illallah

آشهد آن الله علی کل شیء قدیر (At that moment, "Ezekiel" said:(۱

.Tafsir Al-Safa ۱: ۱۱۵ below the verse ۲۴۴ of Sura Baqarah)

t:۳۸۲

.Tafsir Al-Asfa ۱:۱۱۵ under the verse ۲۴۴ Sura Baqarah -۱

:In various verses, the holy Quran talks about ' Raj'at ' during Imam-e-Zaman's rule *

و يوم نحشر من كل آمه فوجا ممن يكذب بآياتنا فهم يوزعون

AND ON THE DAY WHEN WE WILL GATHER FROM EVERY NATION A PARTY FROM " AMONG THOSE WHO REJECTED OUR COMMUNICATIONS, THEN THEY SHALL BE (FORMED INTO GROUPS."(۱)

In interpretation of this verse, we shall narrate a tradition from Tafsir-Kanz-ul-(Daqa'eq:(۲)

Hammad says: Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said, 'What do people say about this verse " We will gather from every nation a party "? I said: 'they believe it is about resurrection.' Imam (a.s.) replied: 'It is not so! Instead, this verse is about ' raj'at '. How can it be that Allah will gather on the day of resurrection only a party or group from every nation and leave behind the rest of the people!? (It cannot be so). The verse that talks about resurrection is the one that says: 'We will gather them and leave not any one of them (behind.'(۳)

t:۳۸۳

۱- NAML (۲۷) : ۸۳

۲- (Kanz-ul-Daqa'eq ۷:۳۷۷; also Al-Burhan ۴:۲۲۸ (tradition ۸۰۴۴

۳- Kahf (۱۸) : ۴۷

: Numerous traditions(۱) have come down about ' Raj'at *

:Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says

Following the split in the earth, the first one to return to life (raj'at) in this world" would be Hazrat Husain-ibn-Ali (a.s.). Raj'at does not concern every people. Rather, (pure believers and absolute polytheists would return to life."(۲

To sum up, promise and glad-tiding about Raj'at (return to life) in future and at the time of Imam-e-Zaman's rule is something having a past record among the past nations and tribes

.For books of reference, refer to end of reply No ۲۴

t:۳۸۴

Anwar-ul-Laame'a: Sayyed Abdullah Shubbar: ۱۹۲ and Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۳:۱۲۲, - ۱ Allamah claims that approximately ۲۰۰ genuine traditions have come down in this .regard

Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۲:۳۹, tradition ۱ -۲

:QUESTION ۲۳

During Imam-e-Zaman's (a.t.f.s.) rule, who would enjoy the privilege of ' Raj'at (return to life)? Does the authority lies with those who return to life or the authority lies only ?with Allah or does it have a fixed and determined time

:REPLY

Undoubtedly, ' Raj'at of people involves specific time and occurs as per Allah's Will. In ' Dua-e-Ahd' , the followers of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) plead before Allah that if death separates them from ' Zuhoor ' (Imam's manifestation), He should raise them from their graves with their body shrouded and sword in hand so that they can answer .their master's call

It's likely that Allah would fulfil this request of the worthy and deserving ones and they would return to this world. Regarding who would return to this world, suffice it is to :mention the following few traditions

t:۳۸۵

:Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said (۱

The first to return to life (raj'at) in this world would be Hazrat Husain-ibn-Ali (a.s.)." 'Raj'at' does not concern every people. Rather, pure believers and absolute polytheists only would return to life."(۱)

:Imam Baqir (a.s.) said (۲

"Verily, the prophet (s.a.w.a.) would soon have a 'Raj'at' (return to life)."(۲)

In interpretation of verse ۸۴ from Sura Nahl, [" And on the day when We will raise a group from every nation "] Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says: (۳

Among the believers none would be killed but that he would return to life and" experience natural death and there is none among the believers who has died a natural death but that he would return to life and get killed."(۳)

In interpretation of verse ۸۱ from Sura Aale-Imran, [" And when Allah made a covenant through the prophets "] Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says: (۴

With faith in Allah's messenger, they would assist Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.). Narrator" says: I asked 'Would they assist Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.)? Imam (a.s.) replied: 'Yes, By Allah, right from Adam till.........everyone! Allah has not chosen any prophet or messenger but that all would return to

t:۳۸۶

۱- Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۳:۳۹, tradition ۱

۲- Ibid: tradition ۲

۳- Ibid: tradition ۳

(this world and fight on the side of Ali-ibn-Abi Talib (a.s.)."(۱)

:Mufazzal-ibn-Omar says (۱

In the presence of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) talk arose about the ' Qaem ' and his friends who would die while awaiting his coming. Imam (a.s.) said: "When our ' Qaem ' will rise, the dead believers would be called upon over their graves by their names; "Your Master has appeared. If you wish, you can join him and if you wish to remain in the domain of (your Lord's Generosity, you may remain so."(۲)

.For books of reference, refer to end of reply No ۲۴

t:۳۸۷

Ibid: tradition ۹ -۱

Ghaibate-Tusi: ۲۷۶ -۲

:QUESTION ۲۴

?(What is the reason and philosophy behind ' Raj'at (return to life

:REPLY

Before looking into the reasons for "Raj'at, it's important to note that with regards to the divine laws and commandments, no common man can understand all their dimensions and reasons except if the All-Wise Allah or one of the prophets or Imams have talked on the matter. Anyhow, by pondering over the numerous traditions on ' Raj'at ',(۱) one can derive several guidelines, though its depth can only be achieved .from the treasure-house of knowledge of the holy Imams

Raj'at ' partly fulfils the aspirations and wishes of prophets and Imams that could not ' be achieved during their initial lives, and that is their presence in a community spread with monotheism and

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Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۳۱۲, tradition ۱ -۱

justice. In this connection, you may refer to traditions No ۱, ۲, ۳ and ۳۹ of the book ⁕ .("Ar-Raj'at" written by Mirza Muhammad Mo'min Astarabadi (۱۱th century

The past people and nations especially the believers have not reached their long ⁕ and innate goal of a just society filled with piety, goodness and knowledge. Refer to .tradition Nos: ۶, ۷ ۸ of same book

Similarly, those awaiting the rule of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) who died while they looked ⁕ forward for their master's manifestation. They expressed their love for Imam (a.t.f.s.) :by reciting 'Dua-e-Ahd' with such words

اللهم ان حال بینی و بینه الموت الذی جعلته علی عبادک حتما مقضیا فآخرجنی من قبری...

O ALLAH, IF DEATH WHICH IS THY SLAVES\' INDISPENSABLE DESTINY CREATES " "....SEPARATION BETWEEN HIM AND ME, THEN RAISE ME FROM MY GRAVE

.With such sincerity in prayers, the believers haven’t achieved their goal

Finalization of argument and putting on trial the atheists, hypocrites, and tyrants ⁕ who oppressed the prophets and particularly the immaculate Imams. Refer to ."traditions Nos: ۲۱, ۳۸ ۴۱ of "Ar-Raj'at

t:۳۹۰

Proving and demonstrating Divine Power, by making the dead alive for some * honourable prophets and nations. Refer to verse ١١٠ of Chapter Kahf about the dead returning to life by hands of Jesus Christ and verses ٢١ and ٢٥ of Chapter Kahf about .the people of the cave returning to life

Partial establishment of the greater resurrection within the limits of this world and * .retribution of a few among the pious believers and pure disbelievers

Regarding the preceding three queries on ' Raj'at ', those interested in detailed verses :and traditions on this subject may refer to the following

- Al -Anwar-ul-Lama'e (Arabic), from pages ١٨٨ to ١٩٧; below the phrase "و مصـدق برجعتكم

- Bihar-ul-Anwar (Arabic), vol. ٥٣, p. ٣٩-١٤٤

- (Raj'at from the viewpoint of reason, Quran, and traditions (Persian

- Ar-Raj'at (Arabic), writer has listed eleven traditions on Raj'at .

- .Raj'at or noble government of the household of revelation

- .Raj'at : Allamah Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, fourteen traditions have been narrated

- .Raj'at from Shiite viewpoint

- Raj'at : Sayyed Abul-Hasan Qazvini Rafi'ee (Persian); rational reasons for belief in ' .Raj'at ' and replies to doubts in this regard

t:٣٩١

(Al-Eiqaz Min-al- haja' Bil-Burhan ala'r-Raj'at (Arabic -

Books on Tafsir like Tafsir-e-Safi, Al-Asfa, Kanz-ul-Daqa'eq, Sharif Lahiji, Maj'ma- - :ul-Bayan, Nur-ul-Saqalain, Tibyan etc below the following verses

Baqarah (۲) : ۵۵-۵۶, ۲۴۳ ۲۵۹

Maeda (۵) : ۱۰

Kahf (۱۸) : ۲۵

Nahl (۱۶) : ۳۸, ۳۹ ۸۳

Ghafir (۴۰) : ۱۱ ۵۱

Bani-Israel (۱۷): ۶

t:۳۹۲

:QUESTION ۲۵

What does it imply when we say the sword of Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.) would ?(.accompany and assist Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s

:REPLY

Amir-ul-Mu'minin's special sword is part of the precious heritages of the holy Imams, which is now in the hands of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). Besides, the hand-written Quran by Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.), the walking stick of the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.), the rings of Imams and the heritages of past prophets, the all in all, are in the protection of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). This is so while his inheritance from the past prophets and Imams takes the colour of material as well as spiritual aspect. He is the inheritor of .material belongings as well as spiritual knowledge and powers

Each of the material heritages of prophets is a sign among the Divine signs, by means of which Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) exhibits his powers, and manifests the miracles of all .(.the prophets and Imams (a.s

t:۳۹۳

:Imam Baqir (a.s.) said

When the 'Qaem' rises, he shall do so while possessing the flag of the holy prophet" (s.a.w.a.), ring of Solomon, and stick of Moses."(۱)

:Imam Sadiq (a.s.) too has said

There is no miracle of any prophet or Imam but that Allah will manifest it through our" 'Qaem,' until the argument is finalized for the enemies."(۲)

:In this regard, refer to

Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۱:۲۴۳ -

Esbath'ul-Huda: ۷:۲۷۰ -

Khorshid-e-Maghreb: ۳۴۲ -

Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۳۱۲ -

Ruzgaar-e-Reha'ee: ۱:۴۵۴-۴۵۸ -

t:۳۹۴

۱- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۳۱۲, tradition ۱.

۲- Ibid: ۳۱۲, tradition ۳.

:QUESTION ۲۶

In the battles that took place in the beginning of Islam, divine and mysterious powers supported the Muslims. The holy Quran too has narrated such incidents. Will the same ?(.occur during the rise of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s

:REPLY

Regarding Hazrat Baqi'yatallah (a.t.f.s.), traditions say that it is Allah's indispensable Will to establish his government in the entire land. For this reason, he would be assisted by means of fear that would be cast in the hearts of enemies. Allah's help to Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) is a special one and would be more than that which prevailed .during the time of other prophets or Imams

:We read in the holy Quran

"هو الذی آرسل رسوله بالهدِی و دین الحق لیظهره علی الدین کله و لو کره المشرکون"

t:۳۹۵

HE IT IS WHO SENT HIS PROPHET WITH THE GUIDANCE AND THE TRUE RELIGION" (THAT HE MAY MAKE IT PREVAIL OVER ALL THE RELIGIONS."(١)

Traditions appearing below this noble verse have esoterically interpreted this verse to (refer to the period of Hazrat Mahdi's (a.t.f.s.) rule.(٢)

Of course, considering the vastness of Imam Mahdi's government (which would be global), its success is not possible but by special divine help and in this regard, other .verses and numerous traditions are clear witnesses

According to verse ۵ of Chapter Qasas, too, the establishment of global government by Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) is an indispensable Will of Almighty Allah, that would .definitely occur

:In this connection, you may refer to the following books

- Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) Az Wiladat Ta Zuhoor: ۵۸۱-۵۹۶

- Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), Omeed-e-Mellatha: ۱۰۷-۱۱۳

- Kamaal-e-Hasti Dar Asr-e-Zuhoor

- Raha'ee-Bakhs

- Dar-Fajre-Sahel

- .Khorshid-e-Maghreb, last chapter

- Yaum al-Khalās, Kamel Solaiman

- .Discussions on Imam-e-Zaman, chapters ۱, ۲ ۳

t:۳۹۶

۱- FATEH (۴۸):۲۸

۲- Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۲:۱۹۱; Al-Muhajjah: ۲۲۶; Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۲۹۰, tradition ۱-۳

:QUESTION ۲۷

What would Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) bring with himself at the time of his Reappearance? ?In other words, what would be the consequences of his Reappearance

:REPLY

Whatever has come down in the Quran and the Islamic traditions about Hazrat's .souvenirs is divided into two sections

Considering that the infrastructure of beliefs and deeds are effective in rectification of a society, Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) too would rely on the infrastructures, and would .entrust the main foundations of his government to eminent and superior people

The beliefs of these exalted people hold special importance. They (who are God-worshippers, pious and pure persons) would start their task based on real and innate .values under complete training of Islam and Quran

:The holy Quran has many words about them like

یعبدوننی لا یشرکون بی شیئا

t:۳۹۷

(THEY SHALL SERVE ME, NOT ASSOCIATING AUGHT WITH ME."(١)"

ان الآرض يرثها عبادی الصالحون

(AS FOR) THE LAND, MY RIGHTEOUS SERVANTS SHALL INHERIT IT."(٢)"

و العاقبه للمتقین

(AND THE GOOD END IS FOR THOSE WHO GUARD (AGAINST EVIL)"(٣)"

Pondering over these verses and their likes shows that the vital souvenirs of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) would be pure monotheism, abandonment of polytheism and idol-worshipping, piety and devotion before Almighty Allah, and elevation of knowledge and insight. Of course, justice, at individual and social level, is a natural and logical consequence of 'tauhid ' (monotheism) and piety.

Traditions too reckon monotheism of that era to be widespread; the message of the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) to be global, and Hazrat's rule to be extended all over the land.

Since the diverse chains of society in forming justice and goodness are connected to one another, every part of the Islamic system is linked to monotheism, equity and piety. In other words, true belief and monotheism forms the foundation and infrastructure of good politics, welfare economy, healthy society, trained human-beings, abundant knowledge, tranquil life, etc.

t:٣٩٨

١- NUR (٢۴):۵۵

٢- ANBIYA (٢١):١٠۵

٣- QASAS (٢٨):٨٣

:The below-mentioned traditions reveal the profound realities in this regard

:Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said ⁕

When the ' Qaem ' will rise, no land would remain but in it the cry of 'La-Ilaha-Illallah'," (and 'Muhammadun-Rasul'allah' would be heard."(۱

:Amir-ul-Mu'minin (a.s.) said ⁕

hypocrisy, adultery, wine-drinking, and usury would die away; people would turn....." to devotion, divine laws, piety, and congregational prayers. There wouldn't remain (any hatred against Ahl'ul-bayt."(۲

:Imam Baqir (a.s.) said ⁕

The verse: 'Those who, should We establish them in the land, will keep up prayer and" pay the poor-rate and enjoin good and forbid evil; and Allah's is the end of affairs ."(۳) Concerns Aale-Muhammad where Allah would bestow them with rewards of lands from the East to the West, and religion would turn dominant. Through them, Allah (would destroy heresy ....and there wouldn't remain any sign of tyranny.(۴

:Imam Kazim (a.s.) said ⁕

t:۳۹۹

۱- Tafsir-Aiyashi ۱:۱۸۳

۲- Al-Mahdi: Sadr: ۲۳۹

۳- Haj (۲۲):۴۱

۴- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۴۷۰, tradition ۱

"Only the monotheists and God-worshippers would remain."(1)

* The holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

"He will extract the treasures, divide the wealth and set firm the religion of Islam."(2)

* Also, the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

"....the inhabitants of earth and sky, the birds and wild animals and fishes in the sea would turn glad because of his manifestation. During his era, water would be found abundant; rivers would flow.........(3)

* Once again, the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

"....During the end of my nation's era, Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) will rise. Allah will quench him via rain. The earth will give out its vegetation. He will bestow wealth correctly. Fruits will become abundant. The 'Ummah' (nation) will turn great......"(4)

Verily, these are fulfillment of 'Ziarate Aale-Yasin', as we recite:

"واعمر اللهم به بلادک و أحی به عبادک"

"O Allah, make Your cites thrive and give life to Your slaves by his hands."

t:۴۰۰

1- Ibid: ۴۷۱, tradition ۱

2- Ibid: ۴۷۲, tradition ۲

3- Ibid: ۴۷۲, tradition ۳

4- Ibid: ۴۷۳, tradition ۱

:About souvenirs, you may refer to the following books

- Al-Mahdi (Arabic): ۲۲۹, ۲۳۶, ۲۴۰

- Eqdud-Durar (Arabic): ۱۴۱, ۱۷۳

- Bihra-ul-Anwar (Arabic): ۵۲:۲۷۹, ۳۰۸, ۳۰۹, ۳۹۲

- Asr-e-Zohour (Persian): ۳۵۱ ۳۷۱

- the true government, ۲:۵۹۱ Yaum al-Khalās.

- Tarikh-Ma-Ba'daz-Zohour (Arabic), chapter ۷, pages ۷۷۱-۸۰۳

- Mu'jam Ahadith Imam al-Mahdi (Arabic) ۵:۵۰, ۵۹, ۶۲, ۶۳, ۹۱, ۱۱۲, ۱۱۷, ۱۲۰, ۱۲۹, ۱۳۰, ۱۳۱, ۱۳۷, ۱۳۹, ۱۴۱, ۱۴۷, ۱۴۸, ۱۵۱, etc.

t:۴۰۱

:QUESTION ۲۸

What is the meaning of ' Entezar ' and what are its signs? In its true sense, is ' Enteza r' one of the duties of those awaiting him? What are its effects in lowering the ?problems during the concealment era

:REPLY

Entezar ' means 'to look forward to' or 'to wait' (anxiously). 'Awaiting' requires ' attentiveness and sensitiveness towards the 'awaited one'. 'Awaiting' reveals a person's 'throbbing heart' who tolerates every inconvenience on the path leading towards the beloved 'awaited one'. ' Entezar ' reveals 'belief', 'endeavour', and 'haste' towards the 'awaited one'. The one 'awaiting' learns from his heart, the obligation of fulfilling the duties because this ' Entezar ' and the obligation has taken roots in his .heart

:It can be said that the 'one awaiting' possesses the following qualities

۱ . Longing for perpetual true monotheism and making all efforts for wiping off .polytheism

t:۴۰۳

.Supporting justice and training for spreading justice .۱

.Living a simple, non-luxurious, and incorrupt life .۲

.Endeavour towards development of the lands and people .۳

:And those awaiting him have the following responsibilities

.'Ma'refat (profound knowledge) of the 'awaited one .۱

.Love and friendship towards him .۲

.Obedience and submission to him .۳

.Training one's heart, house, and society for setting up that ideal community .۴

.Gaining nearness to Imam (a.t.f.s.) and preparedness for that community .۵

.Praying for his well-being and 'Zohour' (manifestation) and calling upon him for help .۶

:The result of such awaitness would be

.Mental and spiritual peace and tranquillity of the individuals and the communities .۱

.Partial establishment of an utopian community .۲

.'Creation of happiness for the 'awaited one .۳

."Establishment of strong relationship with the holy "awaited Imam .۴

:About the reality of ' Entezar ' and the duties of the one 'awaiting', refer to

t:۴۰۴

Muntakhab-ul-Athar (Arabic): ۴۹۲, chapter concerning prohibition of denying the - 'Qaem'; ۴۹۳, chapter concerning the virtues of ' Entezar '; ۵۰۹, chapter concerning some of the duties of Shiites towards him and ۵۱۳, chapter concerning the virtues of .having faith in him during concealment era

Mehre-Mahboob (Persian): ۲۵۸-۲۶۷ -

Mekyaal'ul-Makarem: ۲:۱۶۵-۵۸۳ -

Yaum al-Khalās, Kāmel Solaimān -

Khorshid-e-Maghreb (Persian): chapter ۱۳, pages ۲۵۷-۲۸۷ -

Majaales-e-Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) (Persian): Majles ۱۰ ۱۱ -

(Aafaqh-e-Entezar (Persain -

(Raaz-e-Niyayesh-e-Muntazeran (Persian -

(Dar-Entezar Imam (Persian -

Dar Fajre-Sahel (Persian): ۴۹ -

t:۴۰۵

:QUESTION ۲۹

At what places or times, the possibility of visiting Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) is more? Is it ?our duty or not to take steps and endeavour to meet him

:REPLY

Opposite to the belief of the leaders of 'Shaikhiya' sect, the Shiites do not believe that Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) lives in a separate world. Rather, they believe he lives in this very land. Thus, it's possible to see and visit him. But nobody can claim that he, or she, has an appointment with him tomorrow, or next week; and none can dare say that he can !meet him whenever he desires so

Numerous eminent personalities have met Imam Mahdi during the concealment period which have been narrated in such books like 'Ghaibat-Tousi', 'Esbat'ul-Huda'; 'Bihar-ul-Anwar', Vol ۵۲, and Vol ۵۳, and Najme-Saqeb, chapter ۷. In the lastmentioned book, ۱۰۰ warranted incidents or special attention are quoted through reliable .intermediaries

t:۴۰۷

Books like 'Muntakhab-ul-Athar', 'Re'aayat'ul-Imam al-Mahdi' (a.t.f.s.) and 'Tajalliyate Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.) have narrated other reliable incidents as well. Thus, meeting of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) is not negated; particularly as the compassionate Imam has said, 'we are watchful and take care of our Shiites'.(۱)

It should be emphasised that all the favours are taken by Imam's authority and attention; and not due to one's visiting him. Also, out of Imam's grace, those who were to hold a meeting have never informed anybody about it before the actual meeting (except in rare cases and that has been for conveying a notice, etc.).

As far as we are aware, any effort to visit Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) during his concealment is not mooted as an obligatory or recommendable act. Since the common man, by himself, is unable to succeed and it's only Imam, himself, who manifests before the fortunate ones and casts his great shadow of salvation over him. Therefore, any effort and endeavour for personal contact with Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) is not counted a recommendable act so that a person may make the preliminary preparations for that spiritual journey like the way one is recommended to endeavour for visitation (pilgrimage) to other Imams (a.s.) and the holy prophet (s.a.w.a.).

That which has been said is hearty and spiritual preparation (i.e., ' Ma'refat ' of Imam's position and observance of piety) not in the form of any expectation or due but rather with feeling of hope followed by prayers that:

آللهم أرنى الطلعه الرشيده والغره الحميده

t:۴۰۸

۱- Ehtejaj Tabarsi ۲:۴۹۷

".O ALLAH! SHOW ME THAT UPRIGHT AND HANDSOME FACE"

What is recommended is to recite ' Ziarat ' of Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) at the holy ' Sardab ', and other ' Ziarat(s) ' in different places.(۱) From the above-mentioned prayers, we conclude that we must pave the way with our hearts, and then request Allah to show .him to us if He deems advisable

It's necessary to point out that to some hypocrites, the claim of meeting Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) has become a means of earning fame in the eyes of simple-minded people, and has brought splendour to their worldly life. It's likely that some make such .claims but there isn’t any evidence for proving their claim

Personally, I accept possibility of true dreams, but, since most of them cannot be investigated, I do not rely on such narrations. One can never rely upon the contents of a dream unless it is related from a reliable believer or supported by strong evidences. Thus, the concerned person must be reliable and must possess true faith and one should gain certainty that his narration is not for worldly reasons. If someone .narrates from another reliable person, the chain of authority must be authentic

I have come across simple-minded people, who if bestowed with few favours, link the matter to visitation of Imam (a.t.f.s.). On the other hand, I have also come across eminent personalities, who never uttered such words. Particularly one of them who spent more than eighty years of his life in service and spreading the name of Imam-e-

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۱ - Refer to Kalemat'ul Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), section ۳-۶; Bihar-ul-Anwar ۱۰۲: ۱۸۱-۱۲۶ and Rabi'ul-Anam Fi Khairul Anam: ۳۵۵-۳۹۶ which have narrated various 'Ziarats'.

Zaman. He lit the flames of love for Hazrat in my heart. I was with him at home, or at journey, for ۳۴ years and participated in hundreds of his lectures; but I never heard him claiming to have met or seen Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). His only encouraged .people to serve Hazrat; gain his 'Ma'refat', and spread his doctrines

It shows that even if someone is fortunate enough to meet Hazrat, he will not sell that fortune so easily and cheap; unless its narration will lead to peoples' guidance, and not brighten up his worldly life. Consequently, our divine duty is to perform and present such deeds before Hazrat in such manner that we prepare the background .for God's Grace in providing us the opportunity of meeting him

During this concealment period, when conspiracies are rampant against beliefs and doctrines, I recommend everyone to perform proper and worthy deeds leading to attracting our compassionate Imam's grace and favour. We should spread Imam's ethics, beliefs, spiritualities, ' fiqh ', religion, and style of living by action and then by speech. Such endeavours pave the way for attracting Hazrat's special grace until he .places his hands on our head and increases our intellect and religion

In ۱۹۶۳ or ۱۹۶۴ when I was a young student of seventeen, I came across a mindful and sincere person in Qom . He was a Sayyed and elder than me. He was a new student, a pious and noble one. On recommendation of a friend, I taught that Sayyed Arabic grammar. He was extraordinary in spirituality and morals. Whenever I visited him at his residence, I gained marvellous spirituality. One day, I asked him: 'What should a person do so that he could meet Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.)?' He

t:۴۱۰

replied: 'Act in such manner that HE may look for you! Because he possesses greater means and abilities."

Verily, during concealment, it's our duty to endeavour to increase his friends and lovers. We should protect his ' Vilayat ', and teach his Imamate, concealment, and life in our community. We should acquaint the people about manner, behavior, love, thoughts, qualities and his influence on our day-to-day life. We should establish spiritual relationship with him. All these would result in casting his shadow of grace over us, whether or not he reveals his face.

It shouldn't be forgotten that if we tried but failed to see him it's not because of his carelessness toward us. In such cases, we aren't aware of God's Will and whether it would lead to our benefit or not. We should know that God desires whatever is beneficial for us. Anyhow, every lover desires to see and meet his beloved one.

"It's all my desire to see you,

What's the harm if I achieve my desire?!"

In this connection, refer to:

- Najme-Saqeb, chapter ۹:۵۶۹ and chapter ۱۰:۵۷۷

- Mekyal'ul-Makarem ۲: section ۸

- Yaum al-Khalās

t:۴۱۱

:QUESTION ۳۰

What are the responsibilities of Shiites during the period of Imam-e-Zaman's ?concealment

:REPLY

This is the most important query on Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) because of its practical aspects in the commandments and doctrines of Islam. Islam never supports mere :theoretical matters. In one tradition, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says

الإيمان عمل كله

THE FAITH SHOULD COMPLETELY BE MATERIALIZED IN BEHAVIOR AND " (PRACTICE."(۱

Thus, we can say that during ' ghaibat ' (concealment), the duties of Shiites are linked to action. They should endeavour during this period of severe test, and conspiracies. A Shia should keep himself from the

t:۴۱۳

KAFI ۲:۳۹, A PART OF HADITH NO ۷ -۱

dangers, and then play the role of rectifying the affairs in the society as much as he .can

:In this regard, the Imams have given ۳ important recommendations

Entezar ' (waiting), looking forward for ' Zohour ' (manifestation), that will result in ' -۱ .rectification of the global affairs

.Being careful about of one's deeds and one's special responsibilities -۲

Reciting some of the supplications and invocations -۳

Regarding the first order, the Imams have praised very much the act of ' Entezar '. :One tradition says

آفضل العباده انتظار الفرج

(The most excellent worship is to await ' faraj' (Reappearance)."(۱"

:Or

The one who awaits ' Zohour ' and ' Faraj ' is like a martyr soaked in blood, on the" (way of Allah."(۲

About the second duty, the Imams have laid stress on belief in Allah, acceptance of the holy prophet's message, acknowledgment of divine commandments, submission before the ' Vilayat ' (authority) of Imams, growing weary of their enemies, adopting ,piety

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Bihar-ul-Anwar ۵۲:۲۵ -۱

Ibid, tradition No ۷ -۲

:endeavouring on path of worship etc.(۱) For instance, Imam Baqir has said

".Worship of Allah is the offshoot of His Ma'refat"

'?Narrator asks: 'What is Ma'refat of Allah

Imam replied: 'Belief in Allah, and His Apostle, and Vilayat of Ali and following him and the guided Imams, and growing weary of their enemies. Allah is recognized in this ".manner

:About the third duty too, we may mention such recommended invocations like

آل یاسین...

آللهم کن لولیک...

آللهم عرفنی نفسک...

سلام علی

The holy prophet (s.a.w.a.) had called the believers during the period of ' ghaibat ' as .his brothers and praised them excessively

During 'ghaibat', we should get 'Ma'refat of Allah, Ma'refat of His Prophet, and Ma'refat of Imam. We should also act upon their commands and exalt the name of .Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and spread his thoughts

:For further information about this subject, you may refer to the following books

t:۴۱۵

Ibid: ۱۴۰, tradition ۵۱ -۱

- Mekyaal'ul-Makarem

- Yaum al-Khalās, Kamel Solaiman

- Mehre-Mahboob

- Khorshid-e-Maghreb, chapter ۱۳:۲۵۷

- Dar Fajre-Sahel: ۴۹

- Aafagh-e-Entezar

- Ma'refat-e-Imam Asr (a.t.f.s.): ۲۷۲

- Imamate Wa Mahdaviyat

- Entezar Bazre Enqelab: ۸۳

- Muntakhab-ul-Athar: ۴۹۳ ۵۰۱

- (Paimaan-e-Mahboob (description of Dua-e-A'hd

We can summarize most of the duties into two fundamental fields: (comprising of (belief and practice

* (.To accept the necessity of Hujjat (a.t.f.s

* Recognition of Imam-e-Asr(a.t.f.s.), striving to increase this recognition, and reciting the Dua-e-Ma'refat (اللهم عرفنی نفسک)

* Renewal of covenant to acknowledge monotheism, prophethood and Vilayat and presenting one's belief before him (Ziarate-Aale-Yasin).

* .Following and obeying Hazrat Mahdi strictly

* .Looking forward for his ' Zuhoor ' and ' Faraj ' and reciting Dua-e-Faraj in prayers

* .State of carefulness in safeguarding the bounds of Allah and the immaculate ones

* "إلهی عظم البلاء" Seeking his help at times of hardship and reciting the dua

* To endeavour and recite prayers for remaining steadfast and recitation of Dua-e-Ah'd at dawns.

t:۴۱۶

:Creating love and affection in one's heart and expressing true love before him *

.a) To honour him by sending salutation and reciting prays on Friday and other days

b) Standing on feet after hearing his special title (Qaem), and requesting Allah for .hastening his Zohour

.c) Giving priority to Hazrat Mahdi in one's prays

d) Reciting Ayat'ul-Kursi after every salat, and giving charity for his health and well-.being

e) Gifting him with prayers and recommendable acts like recitation of Quran, Haj-e-.Umra, and Ziarat of Imams, etc

All of these can be summarized in the term "Readiness". Since this term implies preparedness in all aspects, which the waiting person should always preserve until he .acts whenever the need arises

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

Publication of books, booklets and other editions-

Holding book reading competitions-

Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism- places

.Producing animations, computer games and etc-

Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

Fabricatingdramatic and speech works-

Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

Designing systems of accounting, media and mobile, automatic and handy systems,- web kiosks

Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

Holding virtual teacher-training courses-

Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and- English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,- WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

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